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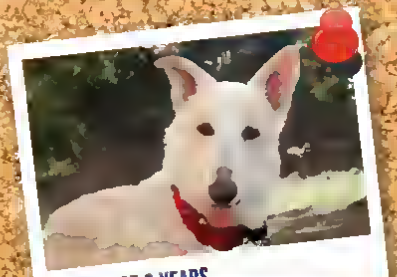

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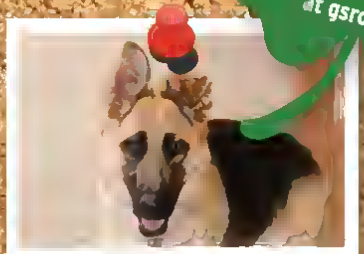

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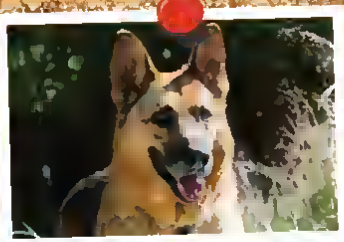
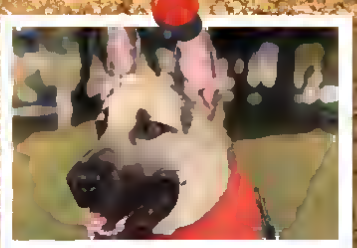


SASHI, AGE 5 YEARS



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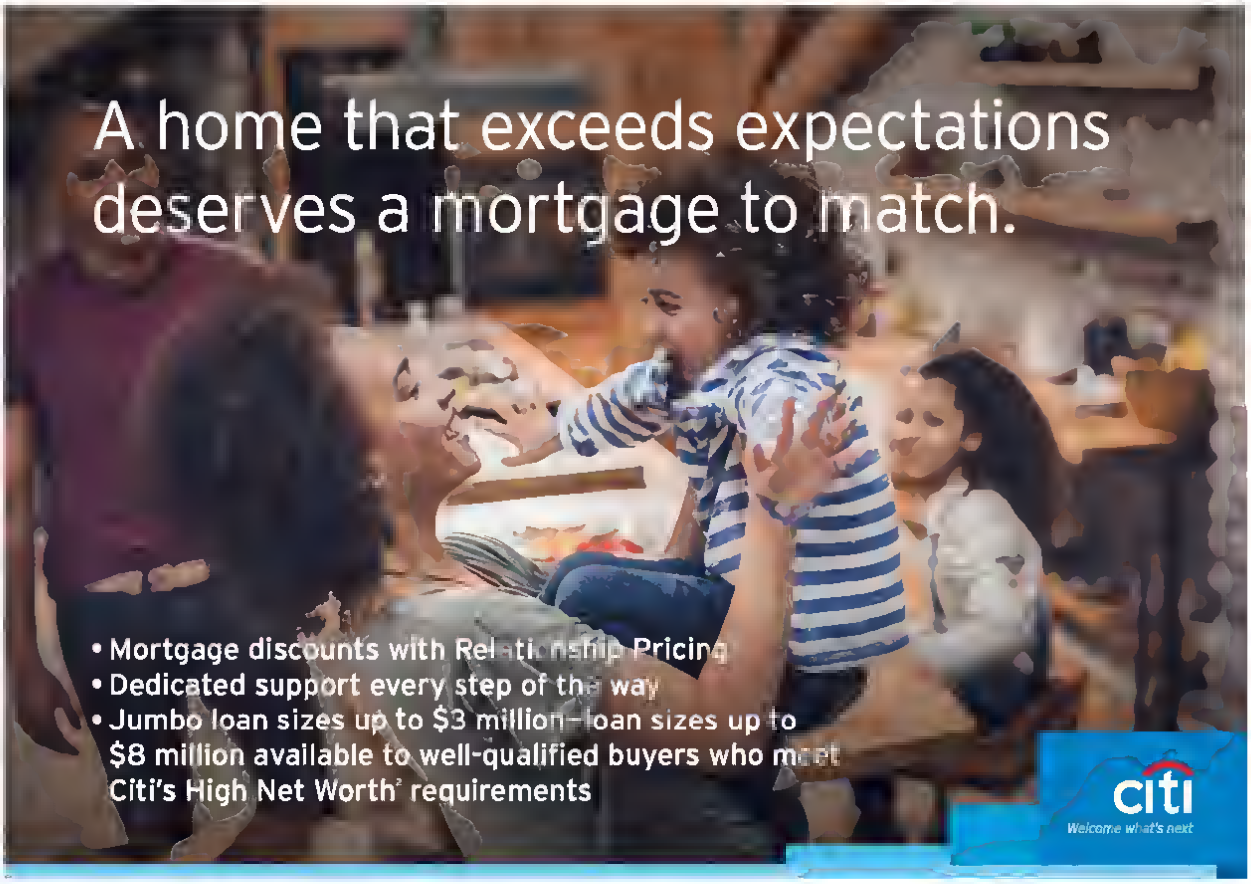
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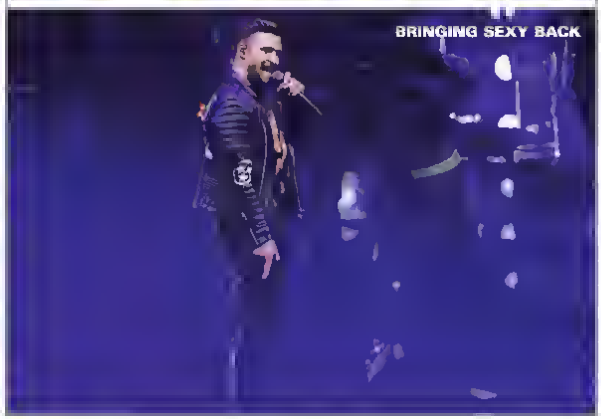


CHRISTOPHER VICTORIO

up front

The County

06 | MOXLEY CONFIDENTIAL | South Korean woman sold as sex slave in the U.S. faces a second setback. By R. Scott Moxley

07 | A CLOCKWORK ORANGE | Tap-dancing around the future of desalinized water. By Matt Coker

07 | HEY, YOU! | Stay postal! By Anonymous

Cover Story

10 | FEATURE | What's next for Orange County's burgeoning beer scene? By Greg Nagel

in back

Calendar

15 | EVENTS | Things to do while drinking too much beer

Food

16 | REVIEW | Utopia European Caffé does a pretty good impression of France, but it's the Turkish food you want. By Edwin Goei

18 | WHAT THE ALE | How to tell when you're given dirty glassware. By Greg Nagel

20 | LONG BEACH LUNCH | Jounetsu Ramen serves up big bowls of comfort. By Erin DeWitt

21 | EAT & DRINK THIS NOW | Introducing the Promenade Pub's new chef/owner. By Greg Nagel

Film

24 | FEST | The Philip K. Dick Science Fiction Film Festival and *Finding Steve McQueen* show off their OC connections. By Matt Coker

25 | SPECIAL SCREENINGS | Compiled by Matt Coker

Culture

27 | ART | Coastline Art Gallery's awkwardly titled "Kitsch-in-Sync: Art and Its Opposite" is all over the place. By Dave Barton

27 | ARTS OVERLOAD | Compiled by Aimee Murillo

Music

28 | ESSAY | Does OC's ska scene really care about a fourth wave? By Lauren Galvan

30 | PROFILE | Lifeguard perch Tower 17 becomes a stage for touring artists. By Scott Feinblatt

31 | CONCERT QUIOE | Compiled by Nate Jackson

also

33 | SAVAGE LOVE | By Dan Savage

35 | TOKE OF THE WEEK | New Frontier Brewing Co. By Jefferson VanBilliard

36 | YESTERNOW | Poorman returns to the airwaves. By Alexander Hamilton Cherin

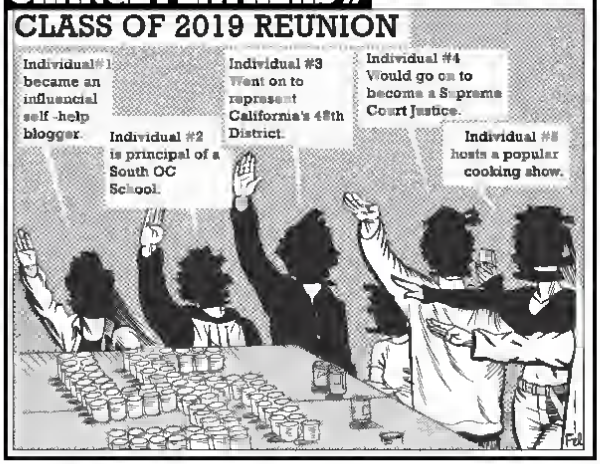
on the cover

Photo by Greg Nagel

Design by Michael Ziobrowski

ORANGE FEATHERS »

CLASS OF 2019 REUNION


Individual #1 became an influencial self -help blogger.
Individual #2 is principal of a South OC School.
Individual #3 Went on to represent California's 48th District.
Individual #4 Would go on to become a Supreme Court Justice.
Individual #5 hosts a popular cooking show.

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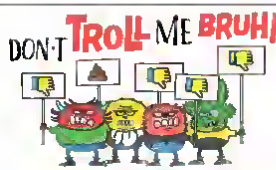

"Now she need to go have talk with that Democrat Congresswoman Omar."
—Brian Pevehouse, commenting in response to Gabriel San Román's "Anne Frank's Stepsister, Holocaust Survivor, Speaks to Teens Pictured at Party Making Nazi Salutes" (March 7)
Our response: Never forget! #MAGA!

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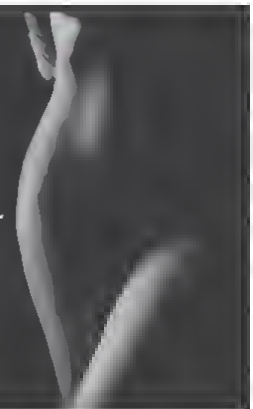

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The Story of Ji

South Korean woman sold as sex slave in U.S. faced a second setback

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL ZIOMKOWSKI

Raised by grandparents without ever knowing her mother or father, who divorced and fled when she was 1 year old, a woman we'll call Ji craved a better life when she left South Korea for the United States. A broker she trusted told her she could have a safe voyage via Japan and Mexico for a $24,000 payment. Ji agreed. But that man had quietly sold the petite, 28-year-old orphan to a Southern California sex-trafficking ring.

»R. SCOTT MOXLEY

When Ji arrived in the Los Angeles area in late 2004 with a provided fake passport, she discovered the truth. Leaders of the ring—men named Peter, Ryan, Andy, Jun and Steve, according to law-enforcement files—demanded she work 24 hours a day, seven days a week as a prostitute until they determined she'd paid off the debt from her trip. Considered property, they branded her body as a cowboy would a steer. She was required to meet a mandatory, daily, 10-man minimum. They also fed her mind-altering drugs to weaken her resistance as well as her ability to escape the building that housed her and other immigrants who'd fallen into the same trap.

The ringleaders made sure their captives understood fleeing would be futile, if not fatal. Ji's one attempt to leave ended with a severe beating, after which she required 40 stitches in her head. She was slapped with a $2,000 enhancement to her debt and denied food for two days.

Then, one night, she saw a desperate Chinese woman try to escape the brothel. The angry pimps caught her and cracked her skull with rock blows. To reinforce their power, they tossed the woman's corpse in a box and ordered Ji and other women to dig a grave.

For almost four years, Ji endured a painful existence off the grid. She was often placed in massage-parlor rooms hidden from potential prying cop eyes. Men in Dallas and San Francisco separately bought her as their personal sex slave, according to Ji.

In 2008, a customer became overcome with guilt and helped her escape out a back door and into an awaiting vehicle. She met other good Samaritans who offered help. However, scars from her experiences were deep. A doctor diagnosed her with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Hallucinations and depression clouded her mind. She also suffered from continual nightmares that the prostitution ringleaders—who'd let her know they were hunting her—would catch, torture and send her back into forced labor. At one point, a suicidal Ji landed in an Orange County medical facility, where treatment improved her condition.

But by 2014, this immigrant still faced a major problem. She hadn't entered the U.S. legally. Actually, she faced a second obstacle, this one perhaps of her own making. To earn a living in L.A., she had opened an internet "shopping mall" business that sold small amounts of illegal narcotics by international mail to South Koreans, according to prosecutors in Seoul.

These law-enforcement officials allege their months-long investigation into drug-carrying mail shipments of toys arriving at Gimpo and Incheon airports eventually identified Ji as the source. In exchange for Korean currency, she shipped cocaine, methamphetamine and Ecstasy pills, police claim. Records show her customers included a housewife in the midst of an affair and a father with a secret addiction he hid by snorting or injecting meth inside his car while he was away from his family.

"There is clear and sufficient evidence to indict Ji," Korean prosecutors announced, if they were successful in winning a conviction, she would face a minimum of five years in prison per count. But there was a hitch. Korean law prevented them from indicting a suspect who is on the run. In June 2016, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency arrested her for violating immigration laws, and the extradition process began.

Ji, who has denied guilt in the narcotics case, didn't want to return to Korea. Her grandparents had died, and she knew no one else there. She also feared she would be abandoned in one of that nation's notoriously neglected mental hospitals for the remainder of her life. With opposition from Korean prosecutors and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Ji sought asylum here.

Last year, her case landed with U.S. Immigration Judge Ian R. Simons, a former federal and local prosecutor. DOJ officials suspected Ji may have fabricated her story and her illnesses, but Simons disagreed after a hearing, saying she'd been treated for years by her abusers as "a commodity" rather than a human being.

"The court found her testimony to be forthcoming, consistent and believable," the judge stated in his October ruling. "The court noted no overt effort on her part to embellish her case or exaggerate her symptoms. In fact, some of the things she said in court were to her detriment."

Simons stated the Korean criminal case wasn't a deal breaker. "The court also understands that this is an individual who is mentally fragile," he stated. "She has a history of being taken advantage of. There is at least some belief that she may have been unwittingly wrapped up in a situation that she was not fully able to comprehend. . . . The court finds that this [criminal allegation] is not an egregious factor such that asylum should be denied."

But this year, DOJ officials asked a different judge, Steve Kim, to comply with South Korea's extradition request. They opined that Kim should not entertain any objections from Ji or "investigate the fairness of the requesting country's justice system." Only U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo can block extradition based on humanitarian concerns, they added.

In a March ruling, Kim—a magistrate judge based in L.A.—agreed, ordering Ji handed over to South Korea prosecutors.

RSCOTTMOXLEY@OCWEEKLY.COM

a clockwork orange»

» MATT COKER

Tap Dance

A study on the cost effectiveness and financial risk of proposals to meet water supply demands through 2050 concludes that the controversial Poseidon desalination project in Huntington Beach would produce more water than Orange County needs and cost ratepayers far more than such alternatives as recycling and capturing rainwater.

Created by the Irvine engineering consultant COM Smith Inc. for the Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC), the recently released 2018 Reliability Study aims to give water agencies the information needed when deciding whether to develop local sources or purchase imported water.

The study is not anti-desalination, as it concludes that a plant proposed in Dana Point is among the best options to meet future needs in South County, where nearly all water is imported. The Doheny Ocean Desalination project has the added bonus of being more environmentally friendly than its Poseidon counterpart, which sucks in massive amounts of sea water and whatever is living in it. The Doheny facility would use advanced slant wells that protect marine life by drawing water from beneath the ocean floor, according to the South Coast Water District, which is considering the desalination technology that, it claims, environmentalists and state regulators prefer and would be cheaper to operate and maintain than Poseidon's.

Groundwater accounts for 75 percent of the supply in North County, where effective management, capturing and storing rainwater behind Prado Dam, and purchasing water from a water-recycling project in Carson would be the most cost-effective and financially stable sources of new water, according to the study.

Michael Markus, general manager of the Fountain Valley-based Orange County Water District, whose board has consistently backed the Poseidon project, complains the MWDOC is telling member agencies which future water supply projects to choose with the study's rankings, which rates Poseidon at the bottom under various scenarios. MWDOC general manager Robert Hunter counters that the study simply evaluates each project, and it is up to each individual agency to make its own informed decision based on the findings.

ILLUSTRATION BY KEVIN McVEIGH

Ray Hiemstra, associate director of Orange County Coastkeeper, a clean-water nonprofit that has been extremely critical of the Poseidon project, defends the rankings. "It is not surprising that proponents of some of the projects that did not rank well are calling for the ranking to be eliminated in the final report," he writes in a letter to Hunter. "MWDOC should not bow to these narrow interests."

Read the study at www.mwdoc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2018-FINAL-OC-Study_Report_Final-Report_02-01-2019-with-appendices.pdf.

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BOB AUL

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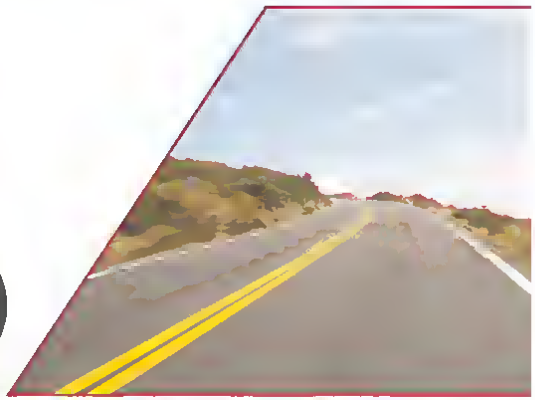

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THE PATH OF YEAST PERSISTENCE

WHAT'S NEXT FOR ORANGE COUNTY'S BURGEONING BEER SCENE?

STORY AND PHOTOS BY GREG NAGEL

BOGDANSKI OF GUNWHALE ALES

Hidden among the arteries of our local freeways and often buried within boxy industrial complexes is a counterculture of flavors rooted in one of the world's oldest beverages: beer.

According to the Brewers Association, Orange County alone has the same number of breweries as the entire state of Nevada, with an estimated economic impact of more than $400 million yearly. As a whole, California, with more than 700 independent craft breweries, earns a stunning national high of $7.345 billion.

Behind the average local brewery are owners who may have tapped their 401(k) funds dry and milked every last penny from friends and family. But they don't go it alone; the people who do the grueling work—everything from serving guests to cleaning glassware, kegs, toilets and parking lots—are rarely recognized as being crucial toward the brewery's success.

But our burgeoning beer scene isn't average; in fact, we're spoiled rich. Breweries in Orange County and Long Beach have won more national and global awards than Los Angeles and San Diego counties combined. Not only do we have the most repeat wins for IPA, but we're also renowned for coffee stout and a style that is having a resurgence: crisp, clean lager.

Who are the people behind the hundreds of styles of beers with thousands of creative names? What's next for our local beer scene? For the answers, I looked to the men and women entrenched in steamy brewhouses who together have one goal: to build on Orange County's hard-earned reputation as an epicenter of innovative craft brewing.

While the rest of the world is asleep, **Gunwhale Ales** *(2960 Randolph Ave., Ste. A, Costa Mesa, 949-239-9074, www.gunwhaleales.com)* assistant brewer Tasha Bogdanski is decked out in well-worn railroad coveralls, safety goggles and black steel-toed muck boots. "You caught me cleaning our hoses," she says with a smile. "Hang tight!" Water then spews from the stainless-steel tap handles uncontrollably. For a brewery that doesn't have a full brew system, the morning holds a lengthy to-do list. "You kind of came on a great day," she continues. "I'm doing some tank readings, titration, dry-hopping three IPA tanks, kegging and yeast harvesting."

As Boy Pablo's "Dance, Baby!" jams in the background, Bogdanski slings five bags of chilled pelletized hops onto Gunwhale's second-level fermentation catwalk, climbs up a squeaky ladder, then squirts isopropyl alcohol around a tank's bottom port. "I have to blow off some of the hop matter caked in the bottom," she explains, then waits patiently as nothing comes out. After a little CO_2 pressure and whacking the pipe with a rubber mallet, *Donkey Kong*-style, green hop sludge gushes down the brewery drain 10 feet below. "Dry-hopping is my favorite part," she says, grinning like a pleased plumber.

When an IPA is dry-hopped, a brewer dumps tiny hop pellets on top of an already (mostly) fermented beer to add to its aromatics. "It's cool to smell the hops going in, then smelling that character in the final beer," says Bogdanski.

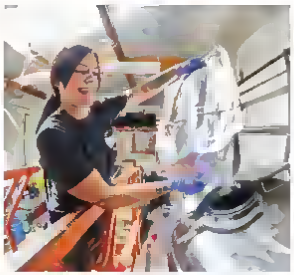
One of Gunwhale's three owners, JT Wallace, enters with a paper coffee cup and a stressed look on his face. While the brew team currently leases space from a nearby local brewery, he's been planning a new location in Orange that will have it all. "We've been getting all the [tenant improvements] done … handicapped-compliant doors, exits, restrooms and such," he says.

The new brewhouse's double mash tuns have been sitting on the lot since summer, notes brewer Kevin Hammons. "I remember sweating my fucking ass off getting tarps put over it," he says, stroking his long beard.

The new mash tun Gunwhale bought is a press system mostly utilized by brewers in Belgium. Malt is first pulverized into flour, then pressed at certain temperatures to extract the sugars. The mash press also allows for non-traditional brewing malts such as 100 percent wheat, rye or even spelt, any of which would traditionally clog up a regular brewhouse. Added bonus: It makes great hazy IPA.

"Once we're all moved in, we'll convert [the original Costa Mesa location] to all mixed fermentation," Wallace vows. While mixed fermentation inside a brewery can often make regular beers unintentionally sour or funky with cross-contamination, having two locations is common among breweries utilizing that technique (e.g., the Bruery and Bruery Terreux).

"I like doing this," Bogdanski says, referring to her brewing work. "It all makes me so happy."



ANDERSON OF STEREO BREWING

Along the 5-mile La Palma Beer Trail, there are 10 breweries, one of which is **Stereo Brewing** *(950 S. Via Rodeo, Placentia, 714-993-3390, www.stereobrewing.com)*. Assistant brewer Tina Anderson can best be described as petite, but her brewing prowess makes her a giant in the beer business. She got her start at Tustin Brewing five years ago, then haunted the likes of Anaheim's Bottle Logic and Fullerton's Bootleggers before landing at Stereo permanently.

"Our brewing process here takes more than eight hours, so [owner] Rick [Smets] starts the day by mashing in, and I'll take over and finish up by doing the runoff, hop additions, whirlpool, cooling and yeast pitch," she notes.

Stereo's production facility isn't like that of a regular brewery; some buildings can smell like a chemical plant mixed with yeastiness, but not here. "I'm kind of OCD, so I'm always cleaning," Anderson confesses. "Sometimes, I like to clean even though it's already clean. I have to just accept that something is as clean as it's going to get and move on."

The process is grueling work. "Whenever someone tells me they want to be a brewer, I always tell them that 90 percent is cleaning and being organized," Anderson says. The other 10 percent is spent ordering supplies and actually operating the brewhouse. "Right now, you caught me doing CIP [clean in place] on a tank, which is a mix of time, friction and temperature. Get the liquid hot, shoot it fast and time each port, then take it all apart to sanitize. Lastly, I purge the tank with CO_2."

Just as a chef utilizes mise en place, the practice of having all food prep in place, Stereo's brewhouse is set up similarly, so an experienced brewer such as Anderson should be able to make beer blindfolded. "Tina has a great deal of fastidiousness," notes Smets. "If I'm not here, her attention to detail is intense. … She'll be here doing things that I don't ever fucking dream of, and I'm insane when it comes to this place."

Being an assistant brewer means there's not always room for creativity, Anderson notes. "Most of the time, you're brewing someone else's recipe over and over, with little room for input," she says. That said, she sometimes tests her ideas by dosing a single keg with extra ingredients to create a one-off. "I did a coffee-cinnamon cold brew oatmeal stout that was super-tasty and rewarding."

At Stereo, the quality of the beer is just as important as the quality of the music playing—though Smets and Anderson definitely don't agree on the sounds they listen to. "Although Rick has turned me on to a number of bands, like Television and Pavement, I still can't get him to like the Deftones," Anderson says. "He calls them the Tonedeafs," she continues, laughing. "I'm more of a rocksteady reggae gal, and he's a Deadhead."

When **TAPS Fish House & Brewery** *(multiple locations, www.tapsfishhouse.com)* started in 1999, during the golden age of big-showy brewpubs, the thought of a branded food truck was probably the furthest thing from owner Joe Manzella's mind. "Craft-beer drinkers, in large part, are frequenting the many OC breweries in greater numbers and with measurable consistency than they are brewpubs," he says.

Although his traditional locations in Brea, Irvine and Corona still do good business, they're much more food-focused than they were 12 to 15 years ago. "Our dining guests still drink beers," Manzella says, "but it's largely as a result of eating there and having one or two pints."

But with the addition of Tustin's Brewery & Barrel Room, TAPS has definitely seen a shift, with beer-lovers coming in for the beer, then staying for the food. "We've adapted, and we're not complaining, but there has been a definite shift," Manzella notes.

PATRONS AT PIZZA PORT

Down in San Clemente, word travels fast when the world's most sought-after beer is being tapped nearby. "We're feeling younger again!" **Pizza Port** *(301 N. El Camino Real, San Clemente, 949-940-0005, www.pizzaport.com)* staff announced on the company's Instagram in February. By the official tapping time of 5 p.m., word had gotten out, and every beer geek in South County lined up for a pint of Russian River's Pliny the Younger, a triple IPA reminiscent of a sparkling hop wine. The sticky-icky aromatics are hypnotic and euphoric—and it can possibly cure whatever *ales* you.

Russian River Brewing recently brought online a huge second brewhouse in Windsor, which means a lot of Pliny-receiving restaurants got almost double their usual amount.

Although some made the trip up to Santa Rosa and Windsor to drink Younger fresh from the source, many knew just where to go locally. Among the places to stalk next year if you want a taste of the youth-giving hop-nectar is definitely Pizza Port. It's sort of the SoCal version of Belgian Trappist breweries; instead of monks, surfer-types make some of the best, most consistent, award-winning beers around.

LARSEN AT TUSTIN BREWING CO.

Tustin Brewing Co.'s *(13011 Newport Ave., Ste. 100, Tustin, 714-665-2337, tustinbrewery.com)* Jerrod Larsen is receiving a shipment of 50-pound malt bags from Brewers Supply Group (BSG). Standing in damp brew boots, he combs the pile for what brewers call "pallet treasure."

"BSG always puts in a Salted Nut Roll candy bar somewhere in the middle," he explains. Sort of like a Payday bar made by the same company that produces Bit-o-Honey, the candy has surely been eaten as breakfast by every brewer in the U.S.

The door swings open as an older customer walks in. "Oh, hey, Clutch," Larsen says to him. He then explains admiringly that the guy fought in World War II and is "a total badass."

"Wait, is that the guy you named Clutch's American Wheat after?" I ask.

"That beer is all he drinks, so we named it after him," Larsen says. "We were super-stoked to win with that beer at the 2018 World Beer Cup."

In the mid-'90s, living across the street from the place, I cut my teeth on microbrewed beer here. Now, whenever I walk in for a fresh pint of Old Town IPA, it's sort of comforting to see not much has changed inside the place—yet the beer seems to always get better.

FENDER AT GOOD BEER CO.

What most local beer-lovers don't realize is the average IPA is a blend of ingredients from all over the globe. It might have malts grown in Canada, Germany or even England, hops that come from the Pacific Northwest, New Zealand or Europe, and yeast that originated sometime in history somewhere in the world that was then propagated in a lab. Each ingredient is loaded with local flavor, and yet, in the glass, it all comes across as a cohesive beverage that tastes like home.

Sour-beer producers such as the **Good Beer Co** *(309 W. Fourth St., Santa Ana, 714-714-2988, www.thegoodbeerco.com/welcome)* go a step further by harnessing wild yeast and bacteria organisms to create a specific house character, then integrating locally grown fruit. A brewer using the same ingredients and techniques on the other side of the globe would yield totally different results.

In Good Beer Co.'s downtown Santa Ana brewery, steam from oak barrels being cleaned floats up the historic brick-

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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THE PATH OF YEAST PERSISTENCE

» FROM PAGE 11

sided walls toward skylights glowing above. Assistant brewer Ian Cirson fills barrels with piping-hot water, then scrubs the previous fermentation *santorum* off their bunghole region.

Despite the livery-throwback vibe here, wooden barrels have been used the vast majority of time since the industrial era. It wasn't until the late 1950s that stainless-steel kegs stored and served beer, but modern-day sour producers once again utilize the porous wood barrels to create microclimates for wild yeast and bacteria to thrive.

DANNY PRIDDY OF RIIP BEER CO

"We grow our own heritage barley for a special beer," notes co-owner Brandon Fender. If you were to pull the stats of how many breweries in America are growing their own grain, the number would be fewer than 10 out of thousands. "Out on a family ranch in Julian, we grow grain, and my brother Bryce has a combine that harvests it."

California doesn't necessarily have a grain-growing tradition, so Fender turned to Midwestern farm blogs for inspiration on the project. The problem wasn't finding info, though, it was locating small-scale production techniques. "We had to research how people grew grain maybe 50 years ago and borrow from that," Fender says.

"A neighbor brought out their seeder, which is sort of like a big pizza-cutter-like contraption that cuts a groove in the soil, then drops seeds in," Fender explains, making hand gestures akin to those of a pizzeria employee.

Mother nature does the watering, with no additional irrigation on the field. "Right now, the grain is all under snow and will spring back in, well, spring," he continues.

With barley, a grower has to trick the grain into thinking it has been rested for a year by controlling its environment. When it's ready to be malted, the grain is submerged for a couple of days so it can germinate. "It's kind of crazy," Fender says. "All the roots kind of grow into one another, and it heats up on its own. ... It's a fun experience, and yet it's so detached from beer."

So much of what the brewer does contributes to the flavor. "I guess our hands are what creates terroir in beer," Fender says. In the wine world, the term refers to how a particular region's climate, soils and terrain affect the taste of the vino.

OC Brewers Guild executive director Erica Cook is often spotted in local tasting rooms. "Ooh, did I tell you about OC Beer Week this year?" she asks, jumping up and down with excitement.

Starting April 27, the festivities kick off with the fourth-annual OC Brewers Guild Invitational, held this year at the Elks Lodge in Garden Grove. Tickets can be found at events.ocbrewers.org (use code NAGEL15 or buy early-bird).

Before **Riip Beer Co.** *(17214 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, 714-248-6710, riipbeer.com)* had a tasting room, it was best known for delivering DanK IPA to Huntington Beach residents from the back of a classic Helms bread truck that had been purchased from Brewbakers. Now with a raging brewhouse on PCH, co-owner Ryan Rasmussen says, the company doesn't have time for that anymore. "We sell 90 percent of the beer we make across our own tasting-room bar," he says, as the Offspring's "Self Esteem" plays in the background as if it's some sort of local anthem.

But the Brewbakers heirlooms didn't stop with the truck. "We were pretty stoked to bring brewer Ian McCall in, as he's such a high-level brewer," Rasmussen says, "and it's cool that he got his start at Brewbakers."

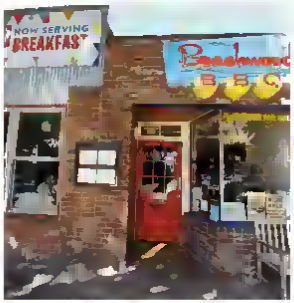
"I actually met my wife at work in Brewbakers back in 2008 and taught her how to brew," McCall says. "We now have two babies."

After working at the homebrew shop and bakery, he cut his teeth professionally at Beachwood BBQ and Brewing in Long Beach, during a time when the pub racked up an extensive list of honors, including back-to-back Brewpub of the Year awards at the 2013 and 2014 Great American Beer Festivals (GABF).

Riip is now known for its ultra-dank Super Cali IPA, which won silver at the 2016 GABF under brewer Andrew Moy, who now brews at Lake Forest's Gamecraft Brewing.

It's tough to talk about local beers without mentioning **Beachwood Brewing** *(multiple locations, beachwoodbrewing.com)*

Stationed at the 10-seat Seal Beach bar where it all started, co-owner Gabe Gordon rants about coffee. "Dude, imagine if Yelpers were to actually rate breakfast spots where the coffee has been burning on a 1970s Bunn carafe hot plate for an hour and the eggs are served burned," he says.



BEACHWOOD IN SEAL BEACH

The dude who came up with a draft system dubbed "the flux capacitor" to ensure proper pours is now geeking out on a new breakfast progeam for his restaurants "We spent almost a year figuring out this menu and coffee service," Gordon says as he takes a sip of his fruity Ethiopian blend

I order a Funkmosa, which is orange juice and Lambic-sour beer from his Long Beach Blendery project and ask about his next location, inside a SteelCraft in Garden Grove "It's on a week-to-week slip, believe it or not, because of the weather," he says "They've been trying to pour concrete all year, but they need a perfect set of 10 days of dryness to make it happen." The new spot will serve Beachwood beer and possibly wine, weather permitting

A few miles away from Beachwood, Levi Fried and Harmony Sage are hard at work at the **Long Beach Beer Lab** *(516 W Willow St , Long Beach, 562-270-3253; lbbeer.com)* As Fried hauls blue barrels of spent grain down the sidewalk, Sage checks the huge timer on her wrist regarding the bread that's baking.

You would never guess Fried (pronounced lay-vee) was a doctor in a previous life—in Israel, no less Sage was a pastry chef at a Ritz-Carlton in Georgia. The couple met on a beach in Israel in the '90s, an odd coincidence since they're both from California. "I started making beer in 2007 while in med school," Fried says, wiping grain dust off his hat bill as he recalled craving fresh hoppy beer, a style that was lacking in the Middle East at the time.

The beer at Long Beach Beer Lab seems ahead of the curve of most modern experimentation. "Right now, we have a sourdough beer with mango," Fried says nonchalantly

He has been experimenting lately with a yeast that supposedly can ferment a beer in three days, it will allow for quicker turnaround on smaller session beers, something that's been a struggle "Kveik is a Norwegian farmhouse yeast that you can ferment over 100 degrees Fahrenheit with no off flavors, so my goal for this week is to turn around a blonde by Friday," Fried says

"Yeah, we've had great results with that yeast on our pastry stouts because it gives it a super-soft quality—almost like we treated the water," Sage adds.

The food here isn't an afterthought All of the bread is made in-house, and some specialty grains are milled on the same machine the beer grains are put through. "I mill our purple prairie malt, rye and spelt in the back," Sage says "Believe it or not, we also grow our own herbs hydroponically on site, and our brewery and bakery are all 100 percent solar-powered "

Something I often hear from brewery owners new and old is that every day is a new day. "I can only imagine what this place will be like in five years," I remark.

Fried pulls a fresh bottle of wild-fermented beer from the tasting-room fridge and pops the cork.

"I still feel like we're just getting started," he says

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friday›
MR WONDERFUL AND HIS BEARD

COURTESY OF AUDIBLETREATS

fri/03/15

[FILM]

The Beat Goes On

Birdman with Live Drum Score

If you've seen the iconic, idiosyncratic and smart 2015 Oscar-winning film *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* by director Alejandro Iñárritu, you shouldn't miss hearing it. The much-lauded absurdist, existential comedy about an alienated superhero actor is also a jazz film, a narrative device, rhythmic tone poem, beat threnody, bebop recitation and sometime cardiac-monitoring device that guides character and plot in a virtuoso tour de force. You could close your eyes and still nearly see the movie—accompanied tonight by drummer/composer Antonio Sanchez, performing his soundtrack live—but don't because images and music together make the story's broken super-realism believably unbelievable.

Birdman with Live Drum Score by Antonio Sanchez at Carpenter Performing Arts Center, 6200 Atherton, Long Beach, (562) 985-7000, carpenterarts.org. 8 p.m. $20 —ANDREW TONKOVICH

[CONCERT]

TIME FOR ACTION

Action Bronson

Since he emerged into the hip-hop scene earlier this decade, Action Bronson has been a larger-than-life personality. His swagger, combined with a live show that featured him throwing out bags of weed into the audience, has landed him on lists of the most charismatic rappers. But he also has the game to support his persona. His latest album, *White Bronco*, was released last November via Empire and confirms the Queens-based rapper's prowess as a wordsmith. Though he will always be that big guy from his Viceland shows, Bronson's career—despite a misstep surrounding the song "Consensual Rape"—continues to rise.

Action Bronson with Roc Marciano and Meyhem Lauren at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com. 11 p.m. $30 —WYOMING REYNOLDS

sat/03/16

[CONCERT]

Mike From Pedro

Mike Watt and the Missingmen

Southern California has more than its fair share of punk-rock legends, but few have remained as relevant as Mike Watt. In the 1980s, he started Minutemen, a band integral to the hardcore punk scene, though much more eclectic and experimental than some of their counterparts. Watt's angular, fast, sometimes funky bass playing was a big part of the band's signature sound. Since Minutemen disbanded in 1985, Watt has performed with multiple groups, including his own solo project and a collaboration with his now-ex-wife and former Black Flag bassist, Kira Roessler. These days, Watt spends his time playing with the Missingmen, instead of trying to tour under his old band's name with an almost entirely new lineup (we're looking at you, Reagan Youth).

Mike Watt & the Missingmen and the Drls at Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, alexsbar.com. 8 p.m. $15-$18. 21+ —STEVE DONOFRIO

[POP CULTURE]

GET YOUR CON ON

AnaCon

For the third year in a row, fans of science fiction, comic books and DIY zines will congregate at Anaheim Central Library for AnaCon. This year's guests include Mike Senna, who's famous for building his own replicas of classic droids from *Star Wars*; David J. Peterson, who created the Dothraki language for HBO's *Game of Thrones*; and many more. Rumor has it that Cal State Fullerton's archives will even display an original Philip K. Dick manuscript. There will be children's activities such as face painting and sci-fi story time, Chicana Vegana and Jarry's Taco will sell food, and Unsung Brewing will have a pop-up beer garden. Don't forget to cosplay as your favorite sci-fi character!

AnaCon at Anaheim Central Library, 500 W. Broadway St., Anaheim, (714) 765-1880, anaheim.net/4743/AnaCon. 11a.m. Free —STEVE DONOFRIO

sun/03/17

[HOLIDAY]

Seeing Green

St. Patrick's Day Party

As any good, drinkin' American knows, the best way to spend this holiday is at an Irish pub, downing whiskey and beer—whether you opt for the green version is a personal preference. We recommend Costa Mesa's Harp Inn, where they'll be starting the party at an eye-opening 9 a.m. Green beer is served all day long, and they'll also dish out hearty, booze-soaking food, offer a special cocktail menu, and give away fun tchotchkes such as beads, hats and sunglasses. Irish band Cilhan's Bridge will handle the live music, and the Harp promises they *will* be wearing kilts. Expect bag pipers and Irish dancers to further entertain your drunken selves. Work on Monday can *téigh do diabhail*.

St. Patrick's Day Party at the Harp Inn, 130 E. 17th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 646-8855, www.harpinn.com. 9 a.m. Free. 21+. —ERIN DEWITT

[FOOD & DRINK]

Feelin' Lucky

Lucky Brews Lucky Grooves

It's time to culturally appropriate all things Lucky Charms leprechaun and show how proud you are that your Ancestry results came back at 3 percent "region of Ireland"—yay, you! At the House of Blues, you'll rock out to three rooms of music, eat hordes of finger foods and guzzle more than two dozen premium craft beers, hopefully none of which has been dyed green because it's no longer 1993. Even if you're 0 percent Irish, don't feel guilty—so was St. Patrick. You're still welcome to celebrate his Christian conquest of the Gaelic pagans and St. Pat's extinguishing of those snakey druids. Boo, snakes!

Lucky Brews Lucky Grooves at the House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 Disney Way, Ste. 337, Anaheim, (714) 520-2334, www.houseofblues.com. 1 p.m. $12. 21+. —SR DAVIES

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mon/03/18

[COMEDY]

Wholesome Laughs

Dry Bar Comedy

Comedy shows are all fun and games until you make the fatal mistake of bringing your grandma to see a vulgar comic with whom you relate a bit too much. Thankfully, Dry Bar Comedy returns to make the whole family laugh—without any of them questioning your lifestyle choices. Gaining massive popularity on social media with more than 1 billion followers and subscribers, the troupe—which includes Shayne Smith, Jay Whittaker, Steve Soelberg and Alex Velluto—pride themselves on clean comedy. And though they debuted only last year, the group have already been featured on such popular late-night shows as *Jimmy Kimmel* and *Conan*.

Dry Bar Comedy at Irvine Improv, 527 Spectrum Center Dr., Irvine, (949) 854-5455, improv.com/irvine. 8 p.m. $25. 18+. —MORGAN EDWARDS

tue/03/19

[CONCERT]

Far Out

YPPAH

Does the void call to you? Well, fans of electronic, psychedelic, shoegazing music have an opportunity to cast their cares into oblivion and space out with YPPAH at Que Sera. Psychotropic enhancements are strictly optional, as the sonic waves generated by YPPAH's atmospheric soundscapes are sure to carry listeners to other realms. Also on the bill are the trip-hop outfit Furcast and the lo-fi sax sounds of Kassle In the Sky. With a low admission price, this evening is cheaper than most psychotropic enhancements!

YPPAH with Furcast and Kassle In the Sky at Que Sera, 1923 E. 17th St., Long Beach, (562) 599-1070, www.deathousemedia.com. 9:30 p.m. $7-$10. 21+. —SCOTT FEINBLATT

wed/03/20

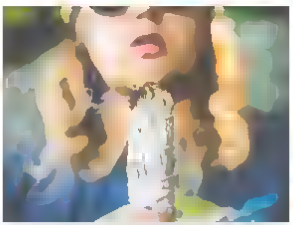
[CONCERT]

Music Therapy

Rose's Pawn Shop

Put a big red circle on your calendar for this one! Blending their own sound of Americana, folk, bluegrass and rock, Rose's Pawn Shop will have you snapping, clapping and slapping your knees. Let the banjo, fiddle, mandolin and upright bass enliven you with their rich sounds, as the five-piece band from Los Angeles add in three- and four-part harmonies. This is music that uplifts and inspires—and let's face it: We could use something uplifting nowadays. Reminiscent of such past iconic greats as Tom Petty or Johnny Cash, Rose's Pawn Shop make you want to throw your party clothes on and take a whirl around the dance floor. It will definitely be a night to remember.

Rose's Pawn Shop at the Wayfarer, 843 W 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, wayfarercm.com. 8 p.m. $7. 21+. —LILA SHAKTI



[RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY]

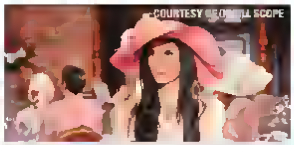
THE PSYCHIC IS IN

Grand Opening Spiritual Fair

Holistic wellness is bigger than ever. If you or your friends can't stop sharing astrological memes or looking for omens from the celestial heavens—or blaming Mercury being in retrograde for everything—come check in with your friendly local mystics at today's Spiritual Fair. To celebrate the grand opening of the Goodvibes Wellness Center, a cadre of tarot, palm and oracle readers will see what's going on in your life, while spiritual and sound healers will be on hand to guide you through your emotional maladies. And if you need to stock up on your energy crystals, sage, candles or witchy outfits, check out the accompanying vendor festival as well. Bring the whole coven down for this energy-cleansing, spiritually grounding event!

Grand Opening Spiritual Fair at Goodvibes Wellness Center, 1490 E. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, (714) 673-1799, www.facebook.com/goodvibesclub1/. 6 p.m. Free. —AIMEE MURILLO

thu/03/21



[FILM]

SIMPLY SPELLBINDING

The Love Witch

In Anna Biller's *The Love Witch*, Elaine is a witch who thinks she might be addicted to love—and her kind of love is searing stuff, maximized by some enthusiastically Hammer horror-esque magic rituals but deadly powerful even on its own. And Biller's entire production is maximized for power the same way, with script and direction and sets and lighting and casting aligned for total symbolic potency. Those who marvel at how faithful *Love Witch* is to a late-'60s/early-'70s look and feel miss the point if they don't keep thinking. *The* aesthetic is somewhere between intoxicating and hallucinogenic, and Biller's painstaking direction makes it one of the few films that actually could pass for a lost classic circa 1970 . . . at least until the plot spins up. But there are deep conversations and concepts—about femininity, masculinity, self and self-image, and more—presented with just as much light, definition and clarity. For once, a visionary with an actual vision. You'll fall in love, and you'll love it.

The Love Witch at the Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 285-9422; thefridacinema.org. 2:30, 5:30 & 8 p.m. $7-$10. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

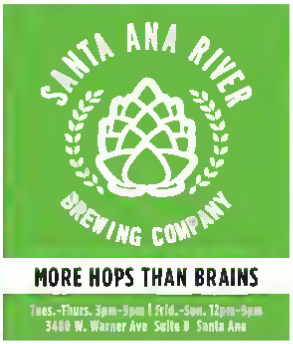
[FESTIVALS]

Live From Long Beach!

Live After 5

In honor of Women's History Month, Live After 5 puts women in the spotlight. Expect live performances by female musicians and artists including Lauren Wakefield, Christina LaRocca and DJ Lili Bird, and a majority of women-owned businesses will vend their wares. For the 21-and-older crowd, drinking holes such as the Federal Bar and Table 301 will offer happy-hour specials on drinks and appetizers. Free trolley rides will take you around quickly, and you can plan your route of participating locations and stops to collect the stamps needed to be entered in a drawing to win a gift card. Start your night at the open gathering spot the Loop.

Live After 5 starts at the Loop, 100 E. Ocean, Long Beach, www.facebook.com/DowntownLongBeach. 5 p.m. Free. —LAUREN GALVAN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La Vie en Tustin

Utopia European Caffé does a pretty good impression of France, but it's the Turkish food you want

BY EDWIN GOEI

The first French element you'll notice as you approach the new Utopia European Caffé is the knee-high steel fence adorned with a growing number of love locks that's evocative of Pont des Arts bridge in Paris. Inside, you'll find even more things designed to convince you that you've stepped into an actual café in France.

From the black-and-white-patterned floor tile to the rattan chairs and the round white marble tables just large enough to hold a croissant and a coffee cup, the interior-design choices were deliberately made by Bobby Navarro, a name usually known in OC foodie circles for his PR work. Utopia's owners, Samuel Lee and Yalcin Aslan, hired Navarro to transform the space, which used to be a Peet's Coffee, and what he has accomplished for them is a cafe that not only can play French on TV, but also looks pretty on Instagram—which is far more important these days.

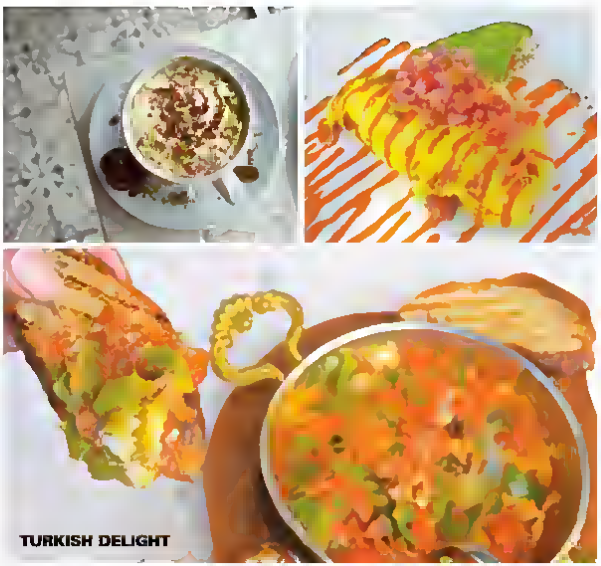
And because it is Instagram-friendly, the place has so far attracted the so-called "influencers" who come to perpetuate the self-feeding cycle of hype via hashtag. One recent picture has a blonde in a short red dress admiring the intricate pattern on the floor tile. The caption on Utopia's repost of that photo openly admits, "Yes, we designed for the 'gram."

The food is also photogenic. The glass case is stocked with cakes that drip cream and chocolate. And if you get a latte, the baristas will, of course, draw pictures on the microfoam to make it worthy of at least a dozen extra "likes."

Its most popular coffee drink is the one featured repeatedly on Instagram, the eponymously named Utopia Latte. And when you see it, you can see why. Sprinkled atop its whipped-cream head of foam are purple rose petals and crushed green pistachios that pop out against the white as if they were Monet's water lilies. But these toppings aren't just for show. As you sip, floral aromas waft into your nostrils as though you just buried your head in potpourri.

In the mornings, most customers pair the coffees with omelets or egg-based breakfast platters, all of which are named after the places that inspired them. The Santa Ana omelet features pico de gallo, and the English egg platter comes equipped with fried toast, beans, mushrooms, grilled tomatoes and spicy sausage.

As the day shifts to the afternoon, everyone starts ordering paninis and pastas. But those who are privy to the fact that Lee and Aslan are the masterminds behind the DonerG chain should seek out the Turkish specialties, which are hidden in plain view amongst the tuna melts and fettuccine Alfredos.



TURKISH DELIGHT

PHOTOS BY MORGAN EDWARDS

Even if you're unfamiliar with DonerG or Turkish food, ordering the avocado toast over the soujouk kashar panini would be a mistake. The latter is clearly the better sandwich. Packed tight with thick slices of soujouk, a Turkish sausage that harbors the spicy wallop of a Slim Jim and the springy texture of a Hillshire Farms smoked link, this sourdough-bread panini is crunchy on the outside and melty on the inside because of the kashar, a sheep's milk cheese that ties it all together.

You'd also do well in choosing the housemade manti over any of the other pastas. As you tuck into a bowl of the ravioli-like dumplings lubricated with dollops of yogurt, red pepper sauce and mint, you taste a dish that's as rare in Orange County as it is satisfying. It's only when you realize someone in the kitchen had to stuff each of these tiny pasta tetrahedrons with a morsel of ground meat no bigger than a pencil eraser that you begin to understand why this labor-intensive dish isn't served everywhere.

If you're just here for the 'gram, know that the manti isn't as attractive as the menemen. Similar to shakshouka, this classic Turkish stew of eggs cooked with tomatoes, green peppers and olive oil is, for some reason, relegated to the Sides portion of the menu. But unlike the hummus and the thick-as-baby-food lentil soup, the menemen is a full-fledged meal that looks as bright as it tastes. After you snap a couple of shots for your feed, scoop it up to eat with toast—you'll need nothing else for the rest of the day.

Do be aware, however, that Utopia can be less than utopian. It's currently suffering from its own viral success such that when it gets busy, some of its customers can become inconsiderate and entitled. These are the kind of people who will save a table, then get in line to order, leaving those who've already paid to stand around until someone leaves. It's something Utopia can quickly fix with a sign that says "No Saving Tables Until You've Ordered" or maybe "Don't Be Rude; You're Not Actually In France!"

UTOPIA EUROPEAN CAFFÉ
2489 Park Ave., Tustin, (714) 352-5789, utopiacaffe.com. Open daily, 7 a.m.–10 p.m. Coffee, $3-$5; dishes, $4-$12. No alcohol.

WHAT THE ALE
» GREG NAGEL

Dirty, Filthy Glassware

As dramatic as it sounds, bands of bubbles that cling to the sides of a freshly poured beer indicate the place you ordered it from has no business in serving beer.

Here I am, at a restaurant in a packed food hall, looking at my locally made lager as if it's an anti-vaxxer's kid with measles. Do I drink it out of shame, or send it back as though it were a food-crusted dirty fork?

Bubbles clinging to the side of a glass indicate one thing. The glass is dirty. Scientifically speaking, bubbles form on nucleation sites inside of a glass with dirt, oil or grease deposits. And that means the beverage you just ordered is marinating in leftover dirt and grime.

Not only does dirty glassware look gross, but it can also affect the taste and perception of the beer. The extra nucleation sites allow more CO_2 to escape your beer faster, meaning it will get flat quickly. Instead of that perfect foam-top head, unclean glassware will lead to a head that dissipates. As you drink, the telltale "Brussels lace" won't follow the liquid down from sip to sip. Getting a gross glass is also a key indicator the place that served it doesn't regularly clean its draft lines and beer faucets, which can cause a rainbow of off flavors.

Most brewery tasting rooms have an impeccable glass-cleaning regimen, so much so I've watched a beertender throw out a beer and repour in a new glass more than a few times. If you see unclean glassware at a restaurant, maybe it's time to drink elsewhere.

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

GREG NAGEL

ERIN DEWITT

Slurp-Worthy

Jounetsu Ramen serves up big bowls of comfort

LONG BEACH LUNCH
» ERIN DEWITT

Residents of the Alamitos Beach neighborhood hardly noticed the shuttering of 1035 Thai Place—until a banner declaring, "Jounetsu Ramen. Coming Soon" was strung across the space's dark windows. And they didn't have to wait long; the new ramen restaurant opened just a few weeks later (it's currently in its soft opening phase).

I heard a Jounetsu waiter explain that 1035 moved to a location with better parking. This stretch of Fourth Street is particularly congested, and parking can be a headache. Or perhaps it moved to Diamond Bar because the saturation of Thai places in Long Beach meant there was just too much competition for 1035.

So how will this new ramen place do? Long Beach's noodle-restaurant population is somewhat smaller, but as seemingly popular eateries in the city tend to abruptly close shop without much notice, time will tell. The parking, however, will always be an issue.

Within 30 minutes of opening on a dreary Wednesday afternoon, however, Jounetsu was full.

Since it moved into an already functioning restaurant, Jounetsu didn't have to do much in terms of remodeling. The layout remains: A long, narrow space holds half a dozen small wooden tables. Outside, the sidewalk patio can hold a few more parties. Each table is adorned with a wooden box holding a trifecta of condiments: the requisite soy sauce, an orange-colored chile oil and a rust-hued chile powder, both of the latter hand-labeled.

Appetizer choices include vegan dishes such as edamame, organic tofu salad or seaweed salad. Jounetsu also makes takoyaki, a popular street food consisting of little eggy balls mixed with octopus; here, they come five per order. The juicy pork bun is a warm, soft, steamed bao bun cradling a few leaves of greens, cucumber slices and crispy-edged fatty pork belly, all drizzled with a spicy aioli. The tiny sandwich is a three-bite deal, not really an appetizer for sharing—so order a few for the table.

Jounetsu prepares its ramen broths for no less than 15 hours, reducing the liquid and bones into a flavorful, silky base. You can choose between shoyu, miso and tonkotsu styles, all of which may be ordered spicy; there's also a vegetable-based broth. Every option (save the veggie one) comes with your choice of pork belly, chicken or tofu.

I ordered the tonkotsu ramen with pork belly. It was loaded with perfectly toothsome, mile-long noodles, crunchy bean sprouts, a few leaves of dark spinach, one large sheet of dried seaweed, a sprinkling of chopped green onions, and a textbook example of a jammy egg. The broth was opaque, unctuous and slick.

If you're feeling indecisive, go for a combination, which offers your choice of a petite-sized rice bowl and any full-sized ramen, plus a small salad of thinly shredded cabbage and carrots in a seasoned, mayo-like dressing.

The chicken rice bowl is pretty straightforward (skipping any veg promised with the entrée version), with tender chunks of chicken in a sweet orange glaze piled atop a mound of sticky white rice.

This is can't-miss comfort food—if you can find parking. The Jounetsu team may have already solved that one, though, as it's already available via Postmates. I'm sure more delivery apps will soon follow.

JOUNETSU RAMEN
1035 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 612-4233.

GREG NAGEL

Change Is Good

Introducing the Promenade Pub's new chef/owner

If you've ever dined at a Michelin-starred restaurant in San Francisco, there's a chance the new owner of the Promenade Pub tweezed micro-greens onto your plate prior to service.

Nidal Nasrah started as a prep cook at Wayfare Tavern, then quickly moved up the ranks to become the lead line cook. He spent a year at the two-star Lazy Bear restaurant before relocating to Orange County to start his own thing.

Anaheim's Promenade Pub, located at the corner of Center Street Promenade and Anaheim Boulevard and facing the historic Packing House, has moved through owners at about the same pace. The pub was originally brought to life less than a year ago by Sonya and Mike Kelsen, who run the successful Colony Wine Merchant.

Nasrah was teaching classes at Sur La Table when Promenade Pub's head chef heard of the budding chef/entrepreneur searching for the right food truck to start out. "I had the business plan in hand and was ready to go," Nasrah recalls, "but I was steered to this location."

Whenever a new owner takes over, especially a chef, you know the menu is going to change, despite any grumblings from the regulars. "The locals have been pretty vocal about keeping the old menu, but I want to let people taste my food," Nasrah says. "Once they try it, they'll realize it's okay to change."

It's more than okay. I'd say; it's an incredible look at what's to come. Mary's Free Range Chicken sliders come in two forms, barbecue or spicy. The panini have steamy fillings, with bread that has a perfect crisp crunch. Then there are the wings that come with a few sauces: buffalo, barbecue and mango habanero, which is made with Stereo Brewing's Tuff Gong Mango IPA. According to new bar manager Danielle Duchesneau, the beer itself is also on tap.

There's also a brunch, during which a $20 bottomless mimosa will pair with another fresh new menu. "This week, I'm debuting a few items such as fried chicken and waffles, and I instructed the servers to never let a glass get empty," Nasrah says.

Are we ready for a Michelin-star kitchen chef to run a pub in downtown Anaheim? It seems as though the fun has just begun.

Eat & Drink This Now

» GREG NAGEL

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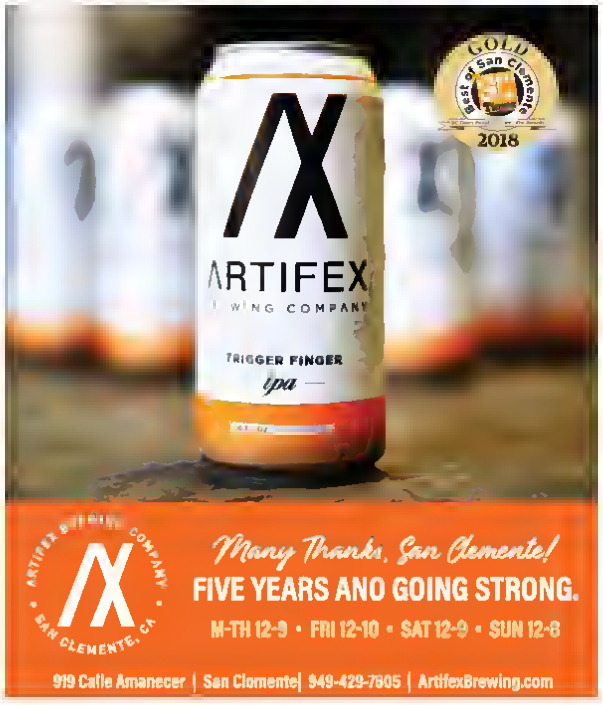

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Dick & Dick Nixon Slept Here

it's proven with Philip K. Dick Science Fiction Film Festival and *Finding Steve McQueen*

BY MATT COKER

After stops in New York and Los Angeles, a film festival opening in Santa Ana this weekend is dedicated to the vision and legacy of Philip K. Dick, the science-fiction writer whose works were adapted for *Blade Runner* and *Blade Runner 2049*, *Total Recall*, *Minority Report*, *A Scanner Darkly*, and *The Adjustment Bureau*, as well as the current Amazon series *The Man In the High Castle*.

Santa Ana was also the final tour stop for Dick, who suffered a stroke in his home there and took his last breath in the city on March 2, 1982. *Blade Runner*, which is based on his novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, opened three-and-a-half months later.

A short walk from Dick's former home is the Ebell Society's clubhouse, the site of many of the seventh-annual Philip K. Dick Science Fiction Film Festival events, including walking tours of historical sites that include the abode.

Kicking things off Friday evening are screenings of winning entries from the first Philip K. Dick Multicultural Dystopian Short Film Challenge, which drew filmmakers from Italy, Canada, Argentina, Colombia, Australia, Switzerland and the U.S., including Orange County.

The locals and their works are: Stefan Allen Buhr, *Based on a True Lie* (two siblings interact under the influence of social media); Alberto Solorio, *Bedlam* (a man plagued by visceral fear escapes from the depths of a murky chamber, only to find himself in a house with a mind of its own); and Alex Murphy and Kai Karafotis, *Valentine* (a young hacker discovers a new program created as a recreational device could change the world for the better).

Entrants were instructed to develop projects that analyze contemporary life in view of themes associated with Dick. Through the influence of the festival's West Coast partner, Media Arts Santa Ana (MASA), a nonprofit that supports community cultural empowerment through special resources and initiatives, a push was also made to include shorts that speak to the author's cultural influence on Santa Anans and represent the multicultural stories of traditionally underrepresented sci-fi filmmakers. As a result, 31 percent of the fest's official entries come from directors or co-directors who are women or minorities.

"Anyone who has ever felt alienated should look up to [Philip K. Dick] because the heroes in his stories were everyday people attempting to retain their dignity in a progressively dehumanized world," says festival founder and director Daniel Abella. "There is a new freshness entering the genre. Science fiction is based on exploring the 'other,' and no one is more qualified than those groups who have been marginalized to tell their story using the tools of sci-fi."

PHILIP K. DICK

DICK: *OC WEEKLY* FILE PHOTO/FILM: COURTESY OF MOMENTUM PICTURES

Friday night's film-challenge programs are followed by the world premiere of Tony Dean Smith's *Volition*, a mind-bending thriller about a clairvoyant who tries to change his fate when he has a vision of his own imminent murder. After an audience Q&A with the movie's cast and crew, the opening-night party goes off at La Santa Modern Cantina.

The festival shifts Saturday to different Santa Ana venues—Orange County Museum of Art and CFAE (Council for Art Education) Gallery—before returning Sunday to the Ebell Club.

"We are excited to bring the festival to Santa Ana and allow fans to see some great films," says MASA director Victor Payan. "This will help create discussion about how Santa Ana and Orange County influenced Philip K. Dick's vision and celebrate one of Santa Ana's most treasured and influential artists."

OC Weekly has partnered with the Philip K. Dick Science Fiction Film Festival to give away 30 pairs of tickets to Sci-Fi Sunday. Go to ocweekly.com/scifigiveaway/ to enter.

Watching *Finding Steve McQueen*, which opens Friday for a one-week run at the Frida Cinema in Santa Ana, I overcame the fact that the United California Bank (UCB) at the center of the heist picture looks nothing like the building I was very familiar with in my childhood through late teens.

On March 24, 1972, a burglary crew from Youngstown, Ohio, entered the UCB branch in Laguna Niguel by blowing a hole through the roof, cracked open the steel vault door and popped open safety-deposit boxes before leaving undetected with $9 million in cash, bonds and jewelry. I spent many summer days during my youth in the retail center that included the bank and the closest store to my late aunt and uncle's fabulous hillside home overlooking the coastline and Dana Point.

I can give *Finding Steve McQueen* director Mark Steven Johnson a pass for not using the actual shopping-center layout, which would pose problems to shoot and translate for viewers. What I cannot forgive is the movie's ultra-bright look and tone. We're talking about what was then the largest bank heist in U.S. history by an outfit supposedly targeting a $30 million slush fund of then-President Richard Nixon, although Tommy Reid sought to dispel the latter notion in his 2014 documentary *Superthief*.

Finding Steve McQueen's rom-com and bumbling burglar elements overpower what should be a darker tone along the lines of a *Ray Donovan* episode or, better yet, *McQueen*'s own *The Getaway*.

However, the movie does make me want to check out the UCB heist stories and podcasts of its co-writer, *Orange County Register* reporter Keith Sharon.

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

THE PHILIP K. DICK SCIENCE FICTION FILM FESTIVAL

at Ebell Club, 625 French St., La Santa Modern Cantina, 220-B E. Third St., Orange County Museum of Art, 1661 W. Sunflower Ave., and CFAE Gallery, Santora Building, 207 N. Broadway, Ste. P, all in Santa Ana. Programs start Fri., 6 p.m.; also Sat.-Sun., 11 a.m. Visit www.masamedia.org or www.thephilipkdickfilmfestival.com for individual program times. Most events are $5-$10; $50 festival passes are $10 off if you use code PKD4EVER! at checkout. online.

FINDING STEVE MCQUEEN

was directed by Mark Steven Johnson, written by Ken Hixon and Keith Sharon, and stars Travis Fimmel, Rachel Taylor and William Fichtner. Opens Fri. at the Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Ste. 100, Santa Ana, (714) 285-9422, thefridacinema.org.

Love Is a Battlefield

BY MATT COKER

COURTESY ANNA BILLER PRODUCTIONS

***Todos lo saben* (*Everybody Knows*).** Unexpected events expose secrets when a Spanish woman (Penélope Cruz) returns with her children from Argentina to attend her sister's wedding in Madrid. *Various theaters; www.fandango.com. Thurs., March 14, visit website for locations, times and ticket prices, also at Art Theatre, arttheatrelongbeach.org. Thurs.–Thurs., March 14–21, 1:30, 4:30 & 7:30 p.m. $9–$12.*

Furie. In Le-Van Kiet's new action movie, which is the first Vietnamese film to be released in the U.S., Veronica Ngo plays an ex-gangster lying low in the countryside after becoming a mother. But she can't escape her violent past when her daughter is kidnapped. *Regency Westminster, (714) 893-4222. Thurs., March 14, 2:05, 4:35, 7:05 & 9:30 p.m. $8.50–$10.50; also at the Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., March 14, 5:30 & 7:45 p.m. $7–$10.*

***Dokhtari dar šab tanhâ be xâne mirawad* (*A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*).** Inhabitants of the Bad City ghost town are unaware they are being stalked by a lonesome vampire (Sheila Vand). *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., March 14, 2:30, 5 & 10 p.m. $7–$10.*

Patterns of Evidence: The Moses Controversy. Rocked by questions about his faith, investigative filmmaker Timothy Mahoney seeks scientific evidence that Moses actually wrote the first books of the Bible. *Thurs., March 14 & Tues., 6:30 p.m., Sat., 12:55 p.m. $10.50–$12.50.*

Fate/stay night [Heaven's Feel] THE MOVIE II. lost butterfly. It's the North American premiere of the highly anticipated anime, presented in Japanese with English subtitles. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., March 14, 7 p.m. $10.50–$12.50.*

Freedom Writers: Stories From the Heart. Erin Gruwell, as a young English teacher at Long Beach's Wilson High School, inspired at-risk students to become more tolerant and to pursue education beyond graduation. The UCI alumna participates in an audience Q&A and book signing after the film. *UCI Student Center, Crystal Cove Auditorium, Pereira and W. Peltason drives, Irvine, (949) 824-6117. Thurs., March 14, 7 p.m. Free.*

MenAlive Presents: Death Becomes Her. Two rivals (Meryl Streep and Goldie Hawn) drink a magic potion that promises eternal youth. After they kill each other over a man (Bruce Willis), the potion revives them as the undead. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., March 14, doors open, 7 p.m., screening, 7:30 p.m. $15.*

The Hole In the Ground. A mom (Seana Kerslake) and her son (James Quinn Markey) move to the Irish countryside, where the boy vanishes one night. To the mother's relief, the lad returns and seems not to be harmed. To her — uh — un-relief, she begins to wonder if that's really her boy. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., March 14, 10 p.m. $7–$10.*

The Philip K. Dick Science Fiction Film Festival. Following stops in New York and Los Angeles, the seventh-annual event returns to Orange County, and one of the two local venues is less than a block from where the prolific sci-fi author lived before he passed in 1982. For more details, see "Dick & Dick Nixon Slept Here," page 24. *Ebell Club, 625 French St., Santa Ana, www.masamedia.org, www.thephilipkdickfilmfestival.com. Fri. & Sun., and at the Orange County Museum of Art, 1661 W. Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, Sat. Visit websites for show times. $5–$50.*

Book of Monsters. In Stewart Sparke's 2018, female-led, horror comedy, six kickass women fight off a horde of terrifying monsters at an 18th-birthday party. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri.–Sat., 2, 4 & 6 p.m., Sun., 2 & 4 p.m., Mon.–Tues., 10 p.m., Wed.–Thurs., March 21, 10:30 p.m. $7–$10.*

Ali Aqa. Kamran Heidari's look at a 70-year old who pays more attention to the pigeons on his roof than he does his own family — and reality. The screening is followed by a Q&A and reception. *UCI, McCormick Hall, Humanities Gateway 1070, First Floor, Irvine, (949) 824-6117, bit.ly/2N0H07q. Fri., 6:30 p.m. Free, but you must RSVP via the website.*

Finding Steve McQueen. Mark Steven Johnson's new crime rom-dram is based on the true story of the biggest bank-heist manhunt in FBI history. In 1972, a Youngstown, Ohio, gang of thieves try to steal President Richard Nixon's $30 million slush fund from a South Orange County bank. Keith Sharon, an *Orange County Register* reporter and host of the *Crime Beat* podcast that covered the caper, co-wrote the script. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 8 p.m.; Sat.–Sun., 7:30 p.m.; Mon., 2, 5 & 7:30 p.m., Tues.–Wed., 2 & 5 p.m., Thurs., March 21, 2 p.m. $7–$10.*

Lords of Chaos. Jonas Åkerlund's 2018 bio-drama finds a teenager (Rory Culkin) mounting stunts to draw attention to his Oslo black metal band — to a very violent end. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 11 p.m., Sat., 8 & 11 p.m., Sun., 10 p.m. $7–$10.*

Climax. A celebration by a troupe of young dancers turns nightmarish when they realize the sangria they have been pounding is spiked with powerful LSD. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 11:55 p.m., Sat., noon, 2:30 & 5 p.m., Sun.–Mon., 10 p.m., Tues.–Thurs., March 21, 11:30 p.m. $7–$10.*

Errol Spence Jr. vs. Mikey Garcia. Live from Arlington, Texas, and beamed into theaters are four boxing matches headlined by the IBF Welterweight Championship bout, where Spence makes a title defense against four-division world champion and current WBC Lightweight belt holder Garcia. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Sat., 6 p.m. $20.*

The Rocky Horror Picture Show. Live shadow cast troupe Midnight Insanity performs. *Art Theatre, arttheatrelongbeach.org. Sat., 11:55 p.m. $8.50–$11.50.*

Gone With the Wind. Set against the backdrop of the Civil War, Georgia plantation owner's daughter Scarlett O'Hara (Vivien Leigh) pursues Ashley Wilkes (Leslie Howard), the husband of her cousin Melanie (Olivia de Havilland), and marries Rhett Butler (Clark Gable). *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Sun., 1 p.m., Mon., 6 p.m. $12.50.*

The Virgin Suicides. See a young Kirsten Dunst and Josh Hartnett in this rom-dram about a group of teen boys obsessing over five sisters who are sheltered by their religious parents in suburban Detroit of the mid-1970s. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sun.–Tues., 2:30, 5:30 & 8 p.m. $7–$10.*

FP2: Beats of Rage. Jason Trost's 2018 action comedy is set in a post-apocalyptic future, when his character, JTRO, who hung up his boots after the events of *FP*, returns to compete in *Beat Beat Revelation*, a deadly version of *Dance Dance Revolution*. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sun., 10 p.m. $7–$10.*

The Reflecting Skin. Philip Ridley's nightmarish 1990 feature debut has been restored. A young man (Viggo Mortensen, in one of his first starring roles) returns home from military service in the Pacific and takes a liking to an English widow (Lindsay Duncan). But his younger brother (Jeremy Cooper) is convinced the lady has been stealing the souls of his neighbors, one by one. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Tues.–Wed., 7:30 & 9:30 p.m.; Thurs., March 21, 9:30 p.m. $7–$10.*

The Love Witch. Anna Biller's 2016 horror comedy is about a modern-day witch (Samantha Robinson) who uses magic spells to get men to fall in love with her. But her attempt to snare the man of her dreams leads her to the brink of insanity and murder. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Wed.–Thurs., March 21, 2:30, 5:30 & 8 p.m. $7–$10.*

Made In Abyss: Journey's Dawn. Riko and her robot friend, Reg, set out on a harrowing trip into the Abyss, whose dark depths have swallowed up many who came before them. The special screening event, which is presented in Japanese with English subtitles, includes never-before-seen footage, exclusive interviews with the anime's creators and a behind-the-scenes look at Kinema Citrus studio. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Wed., 7 p.m. $10.50–$12.50.*

An American In Paris. Vincent Minnelli's 1951 musical is about a struggling American painter (Gene Kelly) who pursues a young French woman (Leslie Caron) while being pursued by an influential heiress (Nina Foch). *Regency South Coast Village, 1561 W. Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 557-5701. Wed., 7:30 p.m. $9.*

Guardians of the Galaxy. It's the 2014 James Gunn popcorn flick that has Chris Pratt leading an intergalactic group of criminals forced to work together to stop a fanatical warrior from taking over the universe. Bring snacks and beverages, but no booze or you will have Ronan the Accuser to answer to. *Fullerton Public Library, 353 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-6327. Thurs., March 21, 1 p.m. Free.*

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Kitsch You Later

The awkwardly titled 'Kitsch-in-Sync: Art and its Opposite' is all over the place

BY DAVE BARTON

PHOTO COURTESY COASTLINE ART GALLERY

"I don't see any kitsch." Curator Bradford J. Salamon pauses a moment after shaking my hand, raises an eyebrow, then asks, "Oh, really?"

I sweep my arms around me, pointing at the fortysomething pieces in the gallery. Aside from a Margaret Keane wide-eyed girl poking her head over a brick wall, none of it actually qualifies as kitsch.

Bad art created by artists trying to create good art, kitsch is a good-faith stab at making something important that isn't. It's art that appeals to the easiest of sentimentalities and is comfortable, with the safety of a large audience in mind. Think Thomas Kinkade's cruddy landscapes of homes covered in snow, windows illuminated by light. Kitsch is the art equivalent of George Orwell's "prolefeed," mass-produced garbage news, entertaining and titillating, distributed to the uneducated to distract them and keep them stupid.

Coastline Art Gallery's awkwardly titled "Kitsch-In-Sync: Art and Its Opposite" is laid out like a quick flip through an Instagram account. Uninteresting art is hung next to great art is hung next to garbage art is hung next to *meh* art, and then the cycle begins again. In his rambling catalog intro (and in person), Salamon's reasons for the show are all over the place, asking a surfeit of questions about the role of gatekeepers, artists and how they view themselves; how opinions on art change over the years; what themes should or should not be represented, and whether art should have meaning. Those are valuable ideas worth discussing, but the exhibition almost wholly ignores the intended theme, as if the artists involved didn't understand what the show was about or because Salamon's lack of clarity on the subject sabotaged it.

I won't bother to mention work that's unexciting or middle-of-the-road or that aggressively tries to be offensive (with the exception of the moronically pretentious *Post Prandial Puke* by Eric Minh Swenson, an installation of record albums, cigars, vomit and unspecified "DNA," something so ineptly executed and flat-out ugly that the less said about it, the better). Some of the most interesting work references kitsch without crossing the line into it: agit-prop maestro Jeff Gillette's hate-on for Disney's fabricated happiness, *Toilet Castle*, putting Mickey and friends amid Third World squalor; Arthur Taussig's smile-inducing *OOO MAO MAO*, built of communist propaganda buttons inside a bamboo frame, Kent Twitchell's *Godfather of Branding*, a pencil-on-polytab rendering of Kinkade's portrait, Kerri Sabine-Wolf's elegant *American Flamingo*; and Tom Dowling's pareidolia installation, *The Madonna Inn and Other Destinations with Wallpaper*, a visage built from two picture-frame eyes, a plastic chandelier, vase and fringe-table nose and mouth, topped off with a Frida Kahlo-esque unibrow of draped brocade. And I laughed at Michael Flechtner's *Maneki Neko Menorah* made of wood, dreidels and plastic Japanese beckoning cats.

Other exceptional work has zero to do with the show's themes: Regina Jacobsen's *Abomination*, a jaw-droppingly intricate feminist oil painting of a topless woman that's half dresser dummy against the ominous background of a church altar festooned with flowers; David DeFelice's well-painted but otherwise innocuous oil-and-charcoal canvas *Jungle High Tide*, with several men holding fish that they've caught; Ciara Rafferty's levitating pool furniture in *Austin Motel One*, Serena Potter's intriguing photorealistic painting *Dilemma*, with two adult women looking at a stash of dirty magazines found in a man's closet, Kristine Schomaker's melancholic conceptual piece, *Comfort and Joy*, its vacuum-sealed plastic bags filled with gaudy Yogurtland spoons hanging on the wall; Jeffrey Vallance's delicate mummified fruit inside a reliquary, *Environmental Orange*, speaks vividly of OC's past while also looking damn cool, Joel Woodward's *Vicegrips*, a haunting acrylic on a 50-inch-by-36-inch canvas, its office-desk IT grunt slowly turning into his faceless-drone co-workers; Laurie Hassold's skeletal rat odes to Banksy, Karrie Ross' child-like mixed-media *Your Stairway Lies in the Whispering Wind*; and *Little Bed*, David Michael Lee's clever ode to Rauschenberg's *Bed*, the artist's ingenious pillow cases for sale bringing the show back to the theme of kitsch's more mercenary focus.

Obviously, just those mentions would suggest that the exhibition is filled with a host of talented artists—and it is. Even if the quality of the work is uneven, Salamon has fine taste, and most of it is at least interesting. But much of it is also too self-conscious and deliberate, trading heart and passion for an empty smirk and a wink. The bread-and-circus appeal of kitsch doesn't ask the hard questions, keeping us ignorant and unmformed at the expense of a new, less trivial understanding of life. In a world in which most people can't tell if the news they're reading or hearing is true, a public differentiation between seductive junk and meaningful work is important, but this missed opportunity isn't the show to do it. Artists making art *about* kitsch isn't actually kitsch; it's just time wasted by good artists making stuff not worthy of their talent.

"KITSCH-IN-SYNC: ART AND ITS OPPOSITE"
at Coastline Art Gallery, 1515 Monrovia Ave., Newport Beach, coastlineartgallery.blogspot.com. Open Tues.-Thurs., noon-4 p.m., Wed., 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Through March 21. Free.

ARTS OVERLOAD

» AIMEE MURILLO

March 15-21

OC CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL. This annual celebration of Japanese and Japanese American culture includes vendors, a night market, food, contests and live entertainment. Fri., 5-9 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Free. Huntington Central Park, 7111 Talbert Ave., Huntington Beach. occherryblossomfestival.com.

VEGGIEPALOOZA! A wide variety of vegetable, herb and garden plants are for sale, with all proceeds going toward the conservation and maintenance of the arboretum. Sat.-Sun., 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. Fullerton Arboretum, 1900 Associated Rd., Fullerton. (657) 278-3407. www.fullertonarboretum.org.

GOLDEN YEARS VINTAGE MARKET. Celebrate retro fashion with vintage and new clothing vendors, music, and more. Sat., 11 a.m. Free. Downtown Santa Ana Promenade, 207 N. Broadway, Santa Ana. goldenyearsmarket.com.

IRISH FESTIVAL. This St. Patrick's Day eve festival offers shepherding demos, strollers, an inflatable obstacle course, bands, food and other activities. Sat., 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. Village Green at Oso Park, 24932 Veterans Way, Mission Viejo. (949) 830-7086. mvactivities.com.

OC ROLLER DERBY. OCRD's Pulp Friction team takes on SFV Roller Derby Wipeouts. Sat., 8 p.m. $15-$20. The Rinks at Huntington Beach, 5555 W. McFadden Ave., Huntington Beach. www.ocrollerderby.com.

7TH ANNUAL REACH FOUNDATION SHAMROCK 'N RUN. This event includes a 5K, 2K, pancake breakfast and a vendor expo, with proceeds benefiting athletic and arts programs of the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District. Sun., 7 a.m. Registration, $20-$37. Yorba Regional Park, 7600 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim. (714) 323-9706. www.reach4pylusd.org.

SUNDAY NIGHT KARAOKE. The vibrant karaoke jockeys and lighting system take this weekly event to the next level. Food and drink deals are also available. Every Sun., 8-10 p.m. Free. 21+. Decades Bar & Grill, 195 W. Center St., Anaheim. (714) 904-1808. www.decadesbarandgrill.com.

"THE THINGS THAT DO NOT SPARK JOY". Jon Haddock uses comic book and video-game visual language to explore the ways images in the media influence reality. Open Tues.-Thurs., 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Fri.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun., 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Through Sept. 15. Free. Grand Central Art Center, 125 N. Broadway, Santa Ana. (714) 567-7233. www.grandcentralartcenter.com.

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BITE ME BAMBI BRING IN THE BRASS

CHRISTINA DE LA TORRE

One Step Beyond

Does OC's ska scene really care about a fourth wave?

BY LAUREN GALVAN

Tahlena Chikami will never forget the time she shared the stage with a band that was around before anyone knew or cared about the waves of ska that would follow.

Chikami's Bite Me Bambi were chosen to open for U.K. ska legends the Selecter for a November show at the Glass House. Front woman Pauline Black was a role model for Chikami, she says, because of how smart she was and how much she did for ska. "We've been very lucky that we have gotten to play some really awesome shows in a short amount of time," Chikami says. "But I think opening for the Selecter was really cool for the whole band because they were such a huge entity for the ska scene in the 1980s."

Now, as Bite Me Bambi's popularity grows, they are becoming a marquee act in their own right. The outfit just announced their first big headlining show, at the Parish Room at the House of Blues in Anaheim on March 29.

Thanks to a fan base that spans all ages and booking agents who believe in small ska bands, the scene has been kept alive through at least three waves, with a fourth being debated. "People who are older remember things like rocksteady, and the middle-aged remember things from the 1980s or the third wave of ska, and then they bring their kids, and their kids bring their kids," Chikami says. "That is how I got into ska."

Pocket Entertainment, a company co-founded by musician Cameron Hallenbeck (of the ska band Half Past Two) and Whitney Dunkle, is doing its part by putting on shows for all ages, including last summer's Skamicon at the Garden Amp in Garden Grove, which is where Bite Me Bambi made their debut. "Our company books all kinds of events but we do tend to focus more on ska music," Hallenbeck says.

New ska bands are being discovered daily, with shows being put on almost every weekend in Orange County. People who travel here bring along a mental image of ska because of the local bands that became popular, such as No Doubt, Hallenbeck says.

Hallenbeck hopes the distinct sound becomes popular again, this time thanks to such fresh talent as Bite Me Bambi. And he's not alone in that wish. "Tahlena is going to be the next big thing to come out of Orange County," says Jimmy Alvarez, a DJ for XX-FM 93.5 and overall music-lover. "She is just as talented as Gwen Stefani, in my opinion."

Alvarez has been on the radio for more than 25 years and is a believer in ska's fourth wave. According to him, what made ska take off in the 1990s was the love that radio gave to the OC bands.

But if ska were to have another wave in Orange County like it did in the 1990s, with it might come the stigma of the genre being mocked or disregarded in the scope of today's popular music. "Many people don't take it serious, and it's unfortunate," Hallenbeck says.

But one person who does take it seriously, having dedicated his life to the genre, is the "Ska Father" himself, Tazy Phyllipz. He created *Ska Parade*, the 30-year-old radio show known for helping to jumpstart many bands' careers during the 1990s, it continues to spread the sounds of ska by playing new bands.

"'Fourth wave of ska' is funny because I think we are all trying to figure out what that means," Chikami says. "We are all wondering if it's here and if we're doing it, which is funny because when third wave was happening, no one was sitting around knowing they were in the third wave."

Both Phyllipz and Alvarez believe ska is in the midst of a major comeback. According to Phyllipz, leading the charge is the LA ska/punk band the Interrupters.

"All you need is one good band who puts out one good song that gets radio love, and then you just watch and see," Alvarez says.

In addition to Skamicon and festivals such as Back to the Beach—which featured the Mighty Mighty Bosstones, Reel Big Fish and Less Than Jake—are fun tours such as the Skacademy Awards (a.k.a. the Oskars), which celebrated its fourth installment in February with a lineup that included Monkey, Half Past Two, B Sharps and Hooray for Our Side.

While some locals seem to want a fourth wave to overtake the county, others seem fine with remembering the old days. And those who are in current ska bands appear to just want to continue playing the music and having a good time.

"There's an amazing scene here in Orange County, where everyone is very supportive, and if you're kind of an outcast, you can be welcomed in," Chikami says. "I would play ska no matter what, and even if no one was showing up, I would still be there asking people if they remember skanking."

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

SCOTT FEINBLATT

Now Playing at Tower 17

A local lifeguard perch becomes a stage for touring artists

BY SCOTT FEINBLATT

It was just after noon when the boys arrived at Tower 17 on the Balboa Peninsula. Anthony Wells led the procession from 17th Street onto the beach. He and two assistants, Justin Ratowsky and Bridger Robinson, were lugging the necessary equipment for the job at hand: cameras, a multitrack recorder, microphones, mic stands, tripods, XLR cables, a blanket and a drone. As they set up equipment, the crew were joined by three of the five members of the San Clemente-based reggae/ska/punk band Tunnel Vision. Within an hour, Wells was recording multiple takes of a minimalist, acoustic arrangement of the band's new song "Hop in the Van."

That's the way they roll at Tower 17.

The Tunnel Vision recording session was the fourth instance in just more than a year in which Wells shot a band performing at the tower. All three previous bands—Mike Pinto, Zander and Kash'd Out—were from out of state, the latter two had their Tower 17 sessions while in town as part of their West Coast tours.

The Tower 17 sessions grew organically from Wells' background in music and film, both of which he studied at Cal State Chico. Just out of school, he started the small music-video-production company Manifest Media with friends. Their work in doing recap videos for such festivals as Lightning In a Bottle were at the forefront of the switch from using traditional video or film cameras to using DSLR (digital single-lens reflex) cameras.

About five years ago, the Mendocino-born renaissance man moved to Newport Beach, won a Best Cinematographer award from the Marina del Rey Film Festival (for the short film *Mountain Trail*), spearheaded a media campaign for San Francisco Conservatory of Music, worked in app development and graphic design (including designing his father Peter's book *Notes From the West Pole*), edited and helped to produce videos for Surf Roots, and became the keyboard player in the band Seedless (for which he also assists with production and engineering).

It was while performing with Seedless that he was asked by the band's manager, Brendon Davis, to shoot a video for another of Davis' acts. "He reached out to me because one of his artists was looking for some content," Wells explained, "and the way he worded it was, 'We just want something better than an iPhone.' So I mic'd him up in my living room and put the camera on him and let him play."

After recording a couple of songs, Wells realized that shooting on the beach, just outside his door, would probably look cooler than shooting on his living-room couch. "The sun was going down outside," he recalls, "and it just hit me, like, 'What are we doing? Let's go outside [and] get some of this amazing light and this amazing ambience!'"

Since all of Wells' equipment was battery-powered, there was nothing to keep his operation anchored. "We just walked out. … It was an impromptu event that spawned this whole project," he says.

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Check out Tower 17's videos on its eponymous YouTube Channel and via its Instagram account, @tower17acoustics

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Friday

ACTION BRONSON, ROC MARCIANO, MEYHEM LAUREN 11 p.m., $30, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

BLANCO Y NEGRO, LA INFINITA, TZAR BOMBA. 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton. (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com.

BRENTON WOOD 9 p.m., $30, 21+, also Sat. La Saeta, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana, (657) 231-6005, www.lasantaac.com

THE GOOD FOOT 8 p.m., $5, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com

SIRIUSXM OUTLAW COUNTRY PRESENTS JAMEY JOHNSON 7 p.m., $35, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

STEPHEN MARLEY, THE LION ACOUSTIC TOUR 8 p.m., $20, all ages. Gordon Amp, 12762 Main St., Garden Grove, (949) 415-8544, gardenamp.com

YUNG GRAVY, BRNOS, TIIIIIIIIIP 8 p.m., $25-$79, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

Saturday

BRIXTON '78 (TRIBUTE TO THE CLASH), THE LAMONES OC RAMONES, BILLY IDOL & BASTAROS OF YOUNG 8 p.m., $5, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

THE DILS, MIKE WATT & THE MISSINGMEN, THE HORSE HEADS, THE LAST 8 p.m., $15-$18, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com

OROELOE, RIOWASTE, TAILS 11 p.m., $15-$25, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

ROOTS OF MINE, EYE IN L 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com

WEATHERS, ARIANA AND THE ROSE, OVERSTREET 7:30 p.m., $15, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

Sunday

LUCKY BREWS LUCKY GROOVES 1 p.m., $12, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

MSOS 1 p.m., free, 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com.

MEAT LOAF PRESENTS BAT 7 p.m., $38, all ages. Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, (949) 496-1930, thecoachhouse.com

THE POGUES ST. PATRICK'S DAY TRIBUTE 5 p.m., free, 21+. La Saeta, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana, (657) 231-6005, www.lasaetaac.com

SAPSCALLION (PIXIES TRIBUTE), NIRVANISH THE GREAT PUMPKIN 8 p.m., $7, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

SOUNDS LIKE DISCO, TWO HEADED CAT, THE ORDER OF THE OIAMONO, LYDIAN ARROW 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com.

Monday

MOON GRASS MOUNTAIN, MEATY, FUNEROL 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

Tuesday

PART TIME 8 p.m., $5, 21+. La Santa, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana, (657) 231-6005, www.lasantaac.com

SEA PARADE ANNIVERSARY SHOW, WITH GOGO 13, THE GOOWIN CLUB, GHETTO ON PHYRE, LOS NAUTICALS 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com

Wednesday

ROSE'S PAWN SHOP 8 p.m., $7, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com

Thursday, March 21

LIL KEED; LIL GOTIT 8 p.m., $10-$12.50, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com

TIMOTHY EERIE, RUFRANO, FODDER, THE NECTARINES 8 p.m., $5, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com

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4/14	ALBERT LEE
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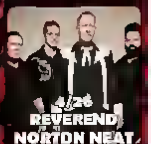
4/27	AMBRDSIA
4/2B	KEIKO MATSUI
5/3	VENICE
5/4	BERLIN
5/5	ARETHA: QUEEN OF SOUL FT: CNARITY LDCKHART
5/9	ROGER CLYNE & TNE PEACEMAKERS
5/10	RAUL MALO
5/11	SONGS & STORIES: AN EVENING WITH ART ALEXAKIS of EVERCLEAR, CHRIS COLLINGWOOD OF FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE, MAX COLLINS OF EVE 6, JOHN WOZNIAK OF MARCY PLAYGROUND



UPCOMING SHOWS

5/12	PRDJECT PRESLEY (ELVIS PRESLEY TRIBUTE)	6/7	ASIA FT. JDHN PAYNE
6/1R	FDREVER RDD (ROD STEWART TRIBUTE)	6/15	DSB
5/17	AN EVENING WITH COWROY JUNKIES	6/16	REE GEER GDLD
5/19	TNE 5TN DIMENRIDN	6/23	AN EVENING WITH JDNN NIATT
5/22	WILLIE K	6/2R	CREED RRATTON
5/23	PUDDLES PITY PARTY	7/13	LOS LDNELY ROYS
5/24	DINGD RDINGD FDRMER MEMBERS	7/23	TED NUGENT
5/25	MUSIC LEGEND DICK DALE	7/24	TED NUGENT
5/2R	RLIND MELDN	9/12	ADRIAN BELEW
5/30	LITTLE RIVER RAND	9/20	NERMAN'S NERMITS
5/31	YDUNG DURLINERS	9/21	NERMAN'S NERMITS
6/1	DESPERADD (EAGLES TRIBUTE)	R/22	GARY PUCKETT
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Sins of the Grandfather

My grandfather was a pillar of the community and beloved by his family. He was also sexually abusive. He died when I was a child. I remember only one incident happening to me. During a cuddle session, he encouraged me to put my mouth on his penis, and then told me to let it be our little secret. I heard rumors as an adult that he molested other kids in the neighborhood. He also had a sexual relationship with my mother. She says nothing happened as a child. But as an adult, he started telling her he loved her in a romantic way. He told her he wanted to take nude Polaroids of her, and she let him. And she loved him—she and her sisters all pretty much idolized him. My one aunt knew (she said nothing happened to her), and I asked her how she reconciled that. She said she compartmentalized it—she thought he was a wonderful father and didn't really think about the other stuff. I did lots of therapy in the late 1980s and early '90s. I read books, I journaled, I talked to my mom and tried to understand what she experienced. And I moved on as much as anyone could. So now it's 2019, and I'm almost 50. My mom just moved into a nursing home, and while cleaning out her drawers, I found the Polaroids my grandfather took of her. I know it was him because he is in some of them, taken into a mirror as she goes down on him. They were taken over a period of years. She had led me to believe he never really did anything sexual with her besides taking photos. But he did. And here's the thing. Dan: In the photos, she looks happy. I know she was probably acting because that's what he wanted from her. But it just makes me question my assumptions. Was it terrible abuse or forbidden love? Both? What am I looking at? What would I prefer—that she enjoyed it, or that she didn't? She kept the photos. Were they her memories? I know she loved him. She kind of fell apart when he died. Was he a fucking manipulator who had a gift for making his victims feel loved and special as he exploited them for his own selfish needs? I don't know if I'm going to bring this up with my mom. She's old and sick, and I dragged her through these types of conversations in my 20s. So I'm writing you. This is so far out of most people's experience, and I want someone who has heard more sexual secrets than probably anyone else in the world to tell me what he thinks.

Whirlwind Of Emotions

I think you should sit down and watch all four hours of *Leaving Neverland*, the new HBO documentary by British filmmaker Dan Reed. It focuses on the experiences of Wade Robson and James Safechuck, two now-adult men who were sexually abused by pop star Michael Jackson when they were boys. Allegedly. It's an important film to watch. WOE, but it's not an easy one to watch, as it includes graphic descriptions of the sexual abuse both men claim to have suffered as boys.

The second most disturbing part of the film after the graphic descriptions of child rape—or the third most disturbing part after the credulity/culpability of Robson's and Safechuck's parents—may be what the men have to say about Jackson. Both describe their abuser in romantic terms. They both say they loved Jackson. And they both remain deeply conflicted about their feelings for Jackson then and their feelings for him now. It was their affection for Jackson—their desire to protect him and to safeguard what Jackson convinced them was a secret and a bond they shared—that led both men to lie to law-enforcement officials when Jackson was accused of sexually abusing different boys.

You should also listen to Reed's interview on *The Gist*, Mike Pesca's terrific daily podcast. Reading your letter the morning after I watched *Leaving Neverland* reminded me of something Reed said to Pesca. "What the film is about is the reckoning. It's two families coming to terms with what happened to their sons. And a big part of understanding that, you know—so why the silence? Why did the sons keep silent for so long? Why did they keep the secret? And the key really is to be able to explain why Wade gave false witness and perjured himself on the witness stand. And the reason for that, of course, has to do with how survivors of sexual abuse experience that. And how they keep a secret and how they sometimes form deep attachments with the abuser and how that attachment persists into adult life."

Your mother, like Robson and Safechuck, lied to protect her abuser, a man who abused her and abused you and probably many others. She may have held onto those photos for the same reason Robson and Safechuck say they defended Jackson: She loved her father, and she was so damaged by what he did to her—she had been so expertly groomed by her abuser—that she felt "loved" and "special" in the same way that Jackson's alleged abuse once made Robson and Safechuck feel loved and special. So as horrifying as it is to contemplate WOE, your mother may have held on to those photos because they do represent what are, for her, "fond memories." And while it would be a comfort to think she held onto those photos as proof for family members who doubted her story if she ever decided to tell the truth, her past defenses of her father work against that explanation.

Leaving Neverland demonstrates that sexual predators like your grandfather and like Jackson—fucking manipulators with a gift for making their victims feel loved and special—plant ticking time bombs in their victims. Even if a victim doesn't initially experience their abuse as a violation and as violence WOE, a reckoning almost inevitably comes. One day, the full horror of what was done to them snaps into focus. These reckonings can shatter lives, relationships and souls.

It doesn't sound like your mother ever had her reckoning—that day never came for her—and so she never came to grips with what was done to her and, tragically, what was done to you. And your aunt wasn't the only member of your family who "didn't really think about the other stuff." Just as denial and compartmentalization enabled Jackson and facilitated his crimes (and allowed the world to enjoy Jackson's music despite what was staring us all in the face), denial and compartmentalization allowed your "pillar of the community" grandfather to rape his daughter, his granddaughter and scores of other children. Like Robson and Safechuck, WOE, you have a right to be angry with the adults in your family who failed to protect you from a known predator. That some of them were also his victims provides context, but it does not exonerate them.

I'm glad your grandfather died when you were young. It's tempting to wish he'd never been born, WOE, but then you would never have been born, and I'm glad you're here. I'm particularly glad you are *here*, right now, embedded in your damaged and damaging family. By telling the truth, you're shattering the silence that allowed an abuser to groom and prey on children across multiple generations of your family. Your grandfather can't victimize anyone else, WOE, but by speaking up—by refusing to look the other way—you've made it harder for other predators to get away with what your grandfather did.

P.S. There's a moment in the credits for *Leaving Neverland* that I think you might want to replicate. It involves some things one of Jackson's alleged victims saved and a fire pit. You'll know what I mean when you see it.

On the Lovecast *(savagelovecast.com): Yikes! It's the trigger show. Contact Dan via mail@savagelove.net, follow him on Twitter @fakedansavage, and visit ITMFA.org.*

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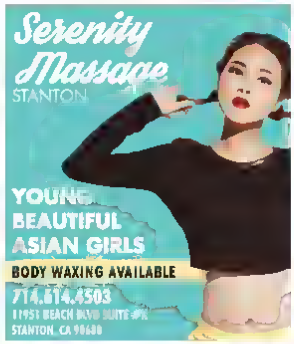
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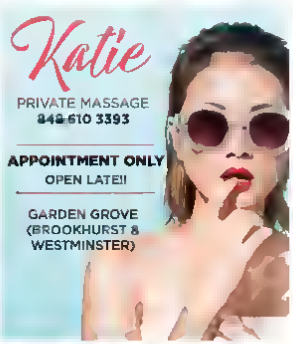
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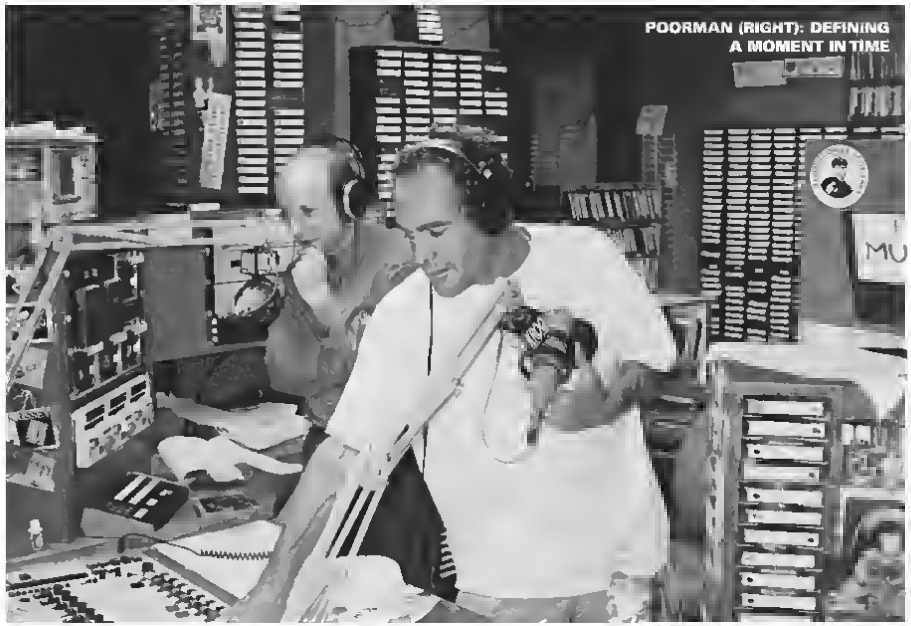
The Poorman Cometh . . . Back

OC's legendarily wacky prankster Jim Trenton returns to the airwaves

BY ALEXANDER HAMILTON CHERIN



POORMAN (RIGHT): DEFINING A MOMENT IN TIME

PHOTO COURTESY KROQ/*OC WEEKLY* ARCHIVES

Just after 3 a.m. on June 17, 2017, roughly 41 years after he had made his radio debut, Rodney Bingenheimer, iconic radio DJ and the anointed "Mayor of the Sunset Strip," walked out of the KROQ building in West Los Angeles for the last time. Under the cover of night, with a single box of belongings, he drove away alone.

As unceremonious (and perhaps undignified) as the occasion may have seemed, the importance was not lost on a fellow former KROQ icon and Orange County staple, Jim Trenton. "What they did to Rodney was just shabby," Trenton says over a caffeinated beverage at Kéan Coffee in Costa Mesa, near his Newport Beach home. As we talked, surrounded on all sides by moms in lululemon yoga togs, it became clear that what *wasn't* shabby was Trenton's perpetual dedication to the power and influence of local radio and TV over the past two and a half decades since his detachment from KROQ.

What also became crystal clear was that Bingenheimer's departure may have actually instigated the return to radio for the radio personality known more popularly as Poorman.

The story of Poorman is very Orange County: part hubris, part redemption, with a keen sense of self-awareness. In the early years of KROQ, Poorman co-hosted the FM station's morning drive-time show. Along with Richard Blade and others, Poorman was responsible for honing KROQ's identity; it was something different from the classic rock stations that had dominated radio for the previous decades, including KMET and KLOS. With Devo, Sparks, Red Hot Chili Peppers and other early-'80s trendsetters in full rotation, KROQ was a legitimate alternative force. Admittedly, he was never hip enough to discover and promote bands, as Bingenheimer had famously done, but he was funny and cool—and that was just fine with both management and the growing listenership.

But as notable as Poorman's deejaying skills may have been, his real rise to prominence came with his creation and hosting of the influential *Loveline*. The call-in show focused on a range of sexual topics, from intimacy problems to B&D, and remained a staple of the station from 1983 to 1993. But subsequent corporate purchases of KROQ, management changes and an increasingly competitive radio climate ultimately led to Poorman being shown the door; he left behind the station and his beloved *Loveline*. That would provide the genesis for his ongoing claim as the "most fired man in radio history."

During the interim 20 years, Poorman has continued on the radio, serving short stints as a morning-show sidekick to Rick Dees on KHS-FM, as well as to other, lower-bandwidth stations. His last true presence on the dial, however, was in the late 1990s, when he hosted his own show (by buying his own airtime) on a tiny radio station in Koreatown. That tenure ended abruptly when Trenton, down to his last week's worth of budget, had his contract serendipitously bought out by the owners.

Since then, Poorman's main staple of cultural relevance hasn't been on radio at all. Rather, it has been his involvement with the on-again/off-again local television show *Poorman's Bikini Beach*. From 1999 to 2017, the program ran on local airwaves, including Santa Ana-based KDOC, and then on a variety of Spanish-language stations. In half-hour tranches, *Bikini Beach* offered interviews with local restaurateurs, cannabis ads (before cannabis ads were hip), scores of local women in bikinis and occasional legal advice. It had all the makings of a beneath-the-radar backdrop for the changing climate of an early-21st-century Orange County. Until it wasn't.

Airtime was increasingly expensive, and with local advertisers now aggressively hawking their wares on social-media platforms, *Poorman's Bikini Beach* no longer had a home. So Poorman pulled the plug.

But there were short glimpses of an afterlife. "I came to find out that even after *Bikini Beach* had been taken off the air here in the U.S., it was one of the top-rated shows on Sony's cable channel in Africa," boasts Trenton. "There may be an opportunity in the future to distribute the *Bikini Beach* series, but for now, you can find bits here and there on YouTube."

Left without a consistent platform for *Bikini Beach* and with radio gigs hard to come by, Poorman has moonlighted for the past few years in various mediums. He has even had occasional cameos in this very publication, as both cover-story subject ("Enter Poorman," November 2007) and guest writer.

And now, bolstered by the ability to claim (with a straight face) an international television audience and deciding to bury the hatchet of resentment nearly 20 years after his firing from KROQ, Trenton will return to the airwaves.

Beginning April 1, from 7 to 9 a.m. weekdays, KOCI-FM 101.5, a low-frequency station broadcasting from Costa Mesa with a reach "between the El Toro Y and Newport Beach," will host a traditional morning drive-time radio program with Poorman at the helm. *Poorman's Morning Rush* will feature music, interviews and a slight flavor of *Poorman's Bikini Beach*, but without the visuals. And with a fitting dose of irony, KOCI's current owner is producer Brent Kahlen, a former KROQ suit and producer. Operating as a nonprofit, the station strives to provide what it calls "creative partnerships" throughout its core Orange County-and-adjacent service areas.

"We're going to have music, a surf report and interviews," Poorman says. "I've spent long enough being mad, and now I'm ready to return to radio and have fun."

The new show comes at a time when morning drive time in Southern California radio is well-populated—and pretty competitive. But optimism, as well as a track record of pulling through despite the circumstances, is certainly on Trenton's side.

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